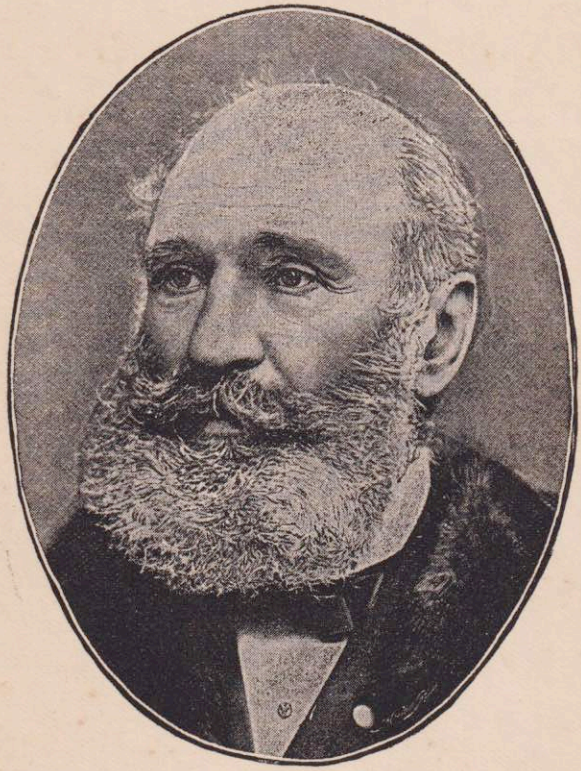
LIFE OF HANDEL

COSSHAM, M.P.

HANDEL COSSHAM, M.P.



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M.P.

BRIEF OUTLINES OF A FULL LIFE.

By

JOSEPH STRATFORD,

Author of "Good and Great Men of Gloucestershire,"
"Gloucestershire Biographical Sketches,"
'Robert Raikes and other Founders of Sunday Schools,
"Wiltshire and Its Worthies," &c., &c.

"Pensioner of God, be grateful; the gift of Life is good:
The life of heart, and life of soul, mingled with life for the body."
Proverbial Philosophy.

BATH: WILLIAM LEWIS & SON, HERALD OFFICE.
1890.

WITH

RESPECT AND SYMPATHY,

I DEDICATE THIS LITTLE BOOK

TO ALL WHO HONESTLY EARN THEIR DAILY BREAD

BY FRET OF BRAIN, OR SKILL OF HAND,

OR SWEAT OF BROW,

ON LAND OR WATER, AT HOME OR ABROAD.

PREFACE.

Nearly thirty-eight years' personal acquaintance with Mr. Handel Cossham has given me opportunities of seeing him under many circumstances, and of hearing of him under many others. My first impressions, which were strongly favourable, were so deepened by fuller knowledge that I ventured, long years ago, some predictions as to his future career. Events have more than verified my prophecies.

Few lives have been fuller of vigorous and varied work, so that my *Outlines* might not only be greatly extended but very closely filled in.

In sending forth this sketch of Mr. Cossham's yet unfinished life, I am not forgetful of the old Greek warning, "Call no man happy until he is dead;" nor of our own English proverb, "Praise a fair day at night:" but animated by the hope that

> He who has helped him hitherto
> Will help him all his journey through,

I have traced his course up to his sixty-sixth year; and now commend him and all his future way to the guidance and keeping of our Father in Heaven.

Disapproval of principles by no means involves dislike of persons; and opposition to institutions may co-exist with charity

towards their supporters. I trust, therefore, that no opinions I have expressed with reference either to religious or political matters will be interpreted as hostile to men of any sect or party. It is my privilege to have many friends from whose views I widely differ, but whom personally I hold in high esteem.

A brief sketch of Mr. Cossham which appeared in the *Biographical Magazine* for May, 1888, has supplied a few of the materials for these *Outlines,* but most of the facts have been gathered from other sources, and so abundant has my information been that it has been difficult to select and condense so as to keep my little volume within the limits I had set.

Gloucester; April 19th, 1890. J. S.

ADDENDUM TO PREFACE.

THIS work was in print and ready for the binder's hands when the active and useful career which it aims to sketch was suddenly closed by death. A bare record of the chief facts is all that I can here give.

On Sunday, April 20th, Mr. Cossham was at his beloved home, Weston Park. In the morning he worshipped at Trim Street Chapel, Bath; in the afternoon conducted his usual Bible Class in his own Room; and in the evening preached at the Wesleyan Chapel, Warmley, afterwards going on to Holly Lodge, where he slept.

On Monday, after transacting business at Kingswood Collieries and in Bristol, he travelled to London, and both on that day and the next was in the House of Commons, taking part in debates and divisions, apparently full of his usual vigour.

On Wednesday morning, April 23rd, he was again at the House, and while writing letters in the Library was seized with an attack of *angina pectoris*. Medical aid was promptly at hand, and, after he had somewhat rallied, he was removed to his apartments at the National Liberal Club. There a second spasm occurred, and in less than two hours from his first seizure, the sad tidings were being

telegraphed to all parts of the Kingdom that Handel Cossham was dead! Full of work and hopes and purposes, he had thus ceased at once to labour and to live.

Sorrow and sympathy were widely expressed; and the funeral on Monday, April 28th, was one of a remarkable character. From his late residence—Weston Park—to his grave in Avon View Cemetery, in the parish of St. George, there were demonstrations of respect and mourning. Among the 50,000 persons, of all classes, who were present, a profound feeling prevailed that a man of singular power, true worth, and great usefulness, had finished his course and entered into rest.

Peace to his memory!

My brief sketch remains as it was written. I add but these few lines, and refrain from attempting any fuller narration of closing scenes.

May 12, 1890. J. S.

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INTRODUCTORY.

"We abound with precept, but we want examples."—*Andrew Marvell.*

"The book of Human Nature has no end; new pages are added to it every day through successive ages; and the moral and religious truths which Wisdom may draw from the human soul, from human life, from human experience, cannot be exhausted."—*Dr. W. E. Channing.*

CHAPTER I.

NATURE is marked by infinite variety. Not only does one star differ from another in glory, but leaf from leaf in form, and atom from atom in size. Man is no exception to this law of diversity. There are no duplicates amidst all the millions of earth's inhabitants. Each face and form, each constitution and character, differs from all others. Lives are equally varied. No two courses run on strictly parallel lines. Even where general resemblance may be most striking countless differences may be traced.

In some instances how marked is the individuality of the man. He cannot be lost in the crowd; he cannot be mistaken for anyone else. It needs no telescope to bring him into view; it needs no microscope to discover his distinctive qualities; ability

is conspicuous ; character is pronounced ; career is clearly defined. In some such instances the fulness with which life is charged is one of its most distinguishing features ; vitality is manifest in thought and feeling, in word and work. This, well controlled and wisely directed, constitutes life in its highest sense, as George Herbert sings :—

> "Active and stirring spirits live alone :
> Write on the others, 'Here lies such a one.'"

It is of an "active and stirring spirit" that I now write.

The period which has been covered by the individual life which I propose to sketch, has proved a truly marvellous one in the history of Britain. Events of strange variety and of vast importance have occurred, and changes of many kinds have been effected. All departments of life and action, all trains of thought and forms of belief, all fields of research and inquiry have been more or less examined, extended, or revolutionised. On the whole, investigation has been wisely conducted so that changes have been improvements and revolution has meant progress. Great political and social reforms have been accomplished. The comfort, welfare, and power of the great body of the people have been promoted ; education has spread and knowledge has increased ; science and art have advanced in all departments ; morality and religion have become more prevalent ; and preparation has been made for further progress on all good lines.

In this wonderful portion of our national history, Mr. Handel Cossham has been a prominent figure and an active agent ; so that he has been described as "a striking personality in Parliamentary, Commercial, Temperance and Religious life." While, as must ever be the case in every human life, the events and influences of the times have done much to shape his character

and course, he, on the other hand, has done no little to form and direct the times. There is a sense in which he might be described as a man of the period, and a sense in which the period might be described as a product of the man. A narrative of the one is involved in that of the other; so that with a biography of the individual there is inseparably wrought up much that makes the contemporary history of the nation.

It, therefore, occurred to me that a record of the chief facts in Mr. Cossham's career would not only be interesting in itself, but also serve to illustrate the course of many most important national events, and set forth truths and lessons which it may be well to teach and enforce. Principles are best expounded by facts, and theories are most easily understood when seen in actual working; while "truth embodied in a tale" may find entrance where otherwise it would find none.

From early youth my sympathies have been largely with those classes to whom this little work is dedicated. I have seen somewhat of the injustice they have suffered; have pleaded their claims to political rights and social privileges; have rejoiced in all their wise and manly aspirations; and gloried in the victories they have won and the advances they have made. But I have often mourned over the slowness of their upward march, seeing, as I have too often seen, that it was the result of their own ignorance, servility and folly, so far as these evils prevailed among them. It has seemed to me clear as the light, that just in proportion to their intelligence and earnestness, their sobriety and moral elevation, their condition would become improved and their prospects be brightened. Men and women possessing knowledge, practising temperance, and influenced by a love of freedom could not long be held in any bondage, or denied any rights.

It has, therefore, often been disheartening to mark the apathy

with which some have regarded education, and the opposition with which some have met the great Temperance Reformation. Scarcely less painful has it been to note how in many instances they have failed to recognise their true friends, and have strangely allied themselves with principles and parties which have ever been hostile to the interests of themselves and their children.

A Tory working man, especially one who has lived through the period now under review, is an enigma hard to be solved. Toryism in all its traditions, maxims and aims, stands arrayed against the freedom and elevation of the people. It has sought, and still desires to secure to the "upper ten thousand," a monopoly of power and a revenue of prosperity, regardless, to a cruel degree, of the rights and welfare of the toiling millions. The legislation which has enfranchised the masses, and given them such liberties and privileges as they now possess, has been, directly or remotely, the work of the great Liberal party. It has had to be effected against long-continued opposition; and, in some instances, could be only imperfectly achieved.

Looking back we might ask where would our middle-class householders, our clerks, artisans, mechanics and labourers now be if Liberals had not fought to win for them the franchise and the ballot? And what would now be the condition of Nonconformists, Roman Catholics, and Freethinkers if there had been no champions of religious liberty? So far as the policy of Conservatism could prevail, the wheels of freedom and progress have been locked and the nation kept in political and religious thraldom.

These assertions will be verified by the facts which the narrative before us will present. With most of these historical facts many of my readers are, doubtless, familiar; others will, probably, learn them for the first time. But the influence of such truths

upon all members of the working population should be the same. It should excite gratitude to those who have laboured for them in the past, it should secure hearty co-operation with them in the present, and it should encourage hope for the future.

It cannot be claimed that even the Liberal leaders of the people have done all that they could and should have wrought. Much more might have been accomplished. Much remains to be done; but the responsibility now, more than ever, rests with the multitudes themselves. They have the power, and wisely using it they will secure for themselves, and transmit to their children, blessings for which their fathers looked and longed, but never saw.

EARLY LIFE.

"God is in our lives."—*William Maude.*

"Our lives through various scenes are drawn."—*Watts.*

"Youth is the spring of life; and by this will be determined the glory of summer, the abundance of autumn, the provision of winter. . . . . It is the seed time, and what a man soweth, that shall he also reap."—*William Jay.*

CHAPTER II.



R. HANDEL COSSHAM is by parentage and birth a Gloucestershire man. His birthplace, the interesting and ancient little market town of Thornbury, pleasantly situated twelve miles from Bristol and twenty-three from Gloucester, just off the direct old coach road between these two cities, is a municipal borough, famous for a handsome church; and also for a noble, but unfinished castle, dating from 1511. Here he was born in Fore Street, on March 31st, 1824; and belonged to a family which had long resided in those parts and which, at one



House in Thornbury
in which Mr Cossham was Born

time, held much property. His birth took place in the same house and room in which his great-grandfather, grandfather, and father had successively entered the world.

Tradition tells of his grandfather as a man of much energy; a vigorous supporter of the Liberalism of his day, and an expert backsword player. It is related of him that on the occasion of the great Guise and Dutton election contest in 1811, when the polling lasted fourteen days, the sturdy Thornbury man went to Gloucester to record his vote for the Whig candidate. Being subjected, as were many others from the country, to violent treatment from party roughs, he achieved some fame by the use which he made of his stout staff. With grim humour he sometimes referred to these operations as the only means by which light could be let into the heads of the opponents with whom he had to contend on that occasion. He died in 1829.

Of his son Jesse, the father of Handel, much might be written. He was by trade a carpenter and joiner; and was in all respects a strong man. His bodily vigour was great; his mental powers were robust and active; while with much that constitutes a fine manly character he was well endowed. Firm, fearless, conscientious, and benevolent; of temperate habits; of deep religious and political convictions; reasonable and inquiring, he could not fail to strike any observer as a man of no common stamp. He was a typical Nonconformist of that somewhat narrow but earnest Puritanical school which is now fast passing away, but to which not only modern Dissenters, but Englishmen at large, owe many a debt for the battles for civil and religious liberty they fought, and the good which in various directions they accomplished. As a lay preacher, Mr. Cossham's occasional labours extended from the slopes of the Cotswolds to the banks of the Severn.

With much knowledge and extreme love of music, he was an

ardent admirer of the great composer of the "Messiah," and to this circumstance his first born and only son, the subject of this sketch, owes the name of Handel. This worthy man died, in the room where he had been born, on May 20, 1887, at the patriarchial age of four score years and seven. His wife, the mother of Handel, belonged to another old family of the neighbourhood, and was a daughter of Mr. Shepherd, of "The Baths," who was one of the "pillars" of the Baptist Church in the town. She was an amiable and gentle-spirited woman, and died in 1855, at the age of 51.

Some twelve month's after Handel's birth his parent's removed to Ryeford, near Stroud, and while there he was baptised at the Old Chapel, Stroud, by the well-known Rev. John Burder, M.A., with whom in after years he was associated in friendship and Christian work. In 1830, the family returned to Thornbury, where as a country builder Mr. Jesse Cossham was engaged in business for many years.

The early life of Handel was such as a boy of vigorous mind and body would be likely to live in a little country town. Every nook and corner were explored, and men and things were sharply noted. The country round was scoured; Severn side, three miles off, occasionally visited for a bath; and the walls of the old castle climbed when opportunity offered. This latter amusement was perilous, and on one occasion nearly proved fatal. The venturesome boy, when at a height of over thirty feet, lost his footing, and would probably have been killed but for the thick ivy at which, from time to time, he desperately clutched, thus breaking his fearful fall.

His shrewd observation, however, even at this period led him to realise that his future position must greatly depend upon his own exertions. This conviction early influenced his pursuits.

He was, perhaps, more than most boys amenable to home influences; and being, to a more than common extent, under parental care, the training he received, especially from his father, formed his chief education and strongly coloured his after life. Of week-day schooling he had but two years, and that at a "dame's" from whose instruction he derived small benefit. In the Sunday School, as well as from his father, he gained much Scriptural knowledge, and became imbued with those moral and religious principles which form the foundation of his character. From the same sources he, doubtless, acquired those mental habits which have so greatly contributed to his success and usefulness. "His father," we are told, "encouraged him to ask questions, giving him in return his own views on political and other matters, and, at the same time, furnishing him with facts to help him form his own opinions."

During these years events were transpiring which were of immense educational advantage to intelligent boys of the period. The Test and Corporation Acts, which had long unjustly held Dissenters under many civil disabilities, were repealed in 1828, after many struggles. In 1829 another great battle which the Roman Catholics, and the advanced friends of civil and religious liberty, had nobly fought, closed in victory—the Catholic Emancipation Bill being reluctantly passed by a Tory Government, of which the Duke of Wellington was Premier. During these prolonged agitations the principles of religious freedom were freely discussed, and became more widely understood and embraced than they had ever before been.

The demand for much-needed Parliamentary Reform rose to a great height in 1830, and led to one of the most remarkable struggles in our national history. Victory was again on the side of freedom, and joy filled the land. Children as well as adults

were jubilant, and many a schoolboy proudly bore home, as his Midsummer holiday's specimen of penmanship, the legend, "Great Reform Bill, signed by Commission June 7th, 1832."

The first Reformed Parliament met on January 29th, 1833. Reform was in the air, and among other good Acts which were passed was that of the Abolition of Slavery. The Emancipation of 800,000 negro slaves in our West Indian colonies was fiercely opposed by their cruel oppressors, but so deeply was the conscience of the nation aroused that the enormous sum of twenty millions of pounds was voted to purchase their freedom. The 1st of August, 1834, saw this glorious measure carried into effect.

The distress which from time to time prevailed in various parts of the country awakened earnest inquiries as to the condition of the poorer classes, the causes of their poverty, and the best means of relief. One result of this was the passing of the New Poor Law Act, in 1834. This measure, although far from faultless, was an immense improvement upon the former system. It has since received several amendments, and still calls for more.

The Municipal Reform Bill, sweeping away many of the corrupt practices of old corporate bodies, and introducing a better system of town government, became law in 1835. Some further grievances of Dissenters were redressed by the passing, in 1836, of Bills for the Registration of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, independent of the State Church. The questions of Tithes, Church Rates, Newspaper Stamp Duty, Vote by Ballot, and many others affecting the liberties and welfare of the people, were vigorously discussed both in and out of Parliament.

In 1838, a few advanced Radicals drew up a document in the shape of a Parliamentary Bill, to which they gave the title of "The People's Charter," and earned for themselves the name of "Chartists." The movement thus commenced was based upon

principles of truth and justice, and although failing to achieve its chief aims, its influence was powerful for good, and continues to be felt to this day.

It was a period of which it might be said "there were giants in those days." Men of high ability and advanced views were exercising great influence upon the masses of the nation, guiding them in the exercise of such power as they had already gained, and in their efforts to obtain more. Among others we might name Joseph Hume, William Cobbett, Daniel O'Connell, and Henry Hunt. These men said and did some things which we do not attempt to justify; but, beyond all question, they were the champions of noble principles, and boldly taught many grand political truths, which, though denounced as deadly evil at the time, are now widely accepted as good and just. Powerful writers and speakers appeared among the working classes, the Press grew in power, popular literature assumed new and improved forms, and thousands of young men, with quickened faculties and noble aspirations, entered upon courses of useful study and mental improvement.

Such was the atmosphere of the times in which the boyhood of Handel Cossham was passed, and which naturally influenced his character and after life. Some interesting illustrations might be given. In 1832 he saw his father record his vote for Grantley Berkeley and Lord Moreton (father of the present Earl of Ducie)—the Liberal candidates who opposed Lord Edward Somerset—and his childish indignation seems to have been aroused by his beloved father laying his hand on his head and saying, as he came from the polling booth, "My boy, I shall, I expect, be ruined for voting Liberal; but I will not vote against my principles and my conscience to please any man." That night the eight-year-old boy prayed that he might live to

stand up against the men who would try to ruin his father. That prayer has been largely answered.

Another incident is worthy of record. On the first of August, 1834, the day of Negro Emancipation, his father directed his attention to the rising sun, and bade him ever remember with rejoicing the glorious morning which brought slavery—"the sum of all villainies"—to an end in all British possessions. The lessons thus impressively taught have never been forgotten.

Our young men would do well to thoroughly study the history of the period which this part of our narrative has slightly touched. There they will see Toryism pure and simple, and learn what their forefathers had to encounter when battling for reform. The long dominant party made no secret of the greed with which they grasped place, power, and pelf; nor did they conceal the contempt with which they regarded the masses of the population as the "mob" composed of "lewd fellows of the baser sort." Education for the poor, except such as was compatible with servility, was discouraged; the diffusion of knowledge was taxed. The higher classes revelled in privileges: the middle and lower bore many privations. The exercise of such rights as were possessed was often attended by pains and penalties. Intimidation, exclusive dealing, and other unjust means were used to deter men from voting honestly or worshipping conscientiously. The majority of the aristocracy, the gentry, the State clergy, professional men and dependent tenant farmers, formed the bulk of a party that stood in the way of all progress, and bitterly opposed the onward and upward march of the toiling and wealth-producing manufacturers, tradesmen, mechanics, and labourers of the nation.

Times have changed; but what Toryism was then Toryism in its essence is now. It is still narrow, exclusive and tyrannical,

failing to grasp the elements of a true national policy. Its present treatment of Ireland is a glaring illustration of its aims and spirit. It coerces rather than conciliates, and rules with an iron rod rather than with a sceptre of righteousness. Thousands of Tories are better than their creed : men personally generous, just and noble ; but their political principles are false, and their policy cannot but be wrong. There can, therefore, be no room to doubt that the predominance of Toryism in the affairs of this great empire is, and ever must be, a national calamity, which true patriots should labour to remove or avert.

RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES AND ACTIVITIES.

"They that would grow divinely wise,
Must with Thy fear begin;
Our fairest proof of knowledge lies
In hating every sin."

WATTS: Paraphrase of Ps. cxi. 10.

"The human mind was made to be religious; to be religious everywhere, in all things and at all times, from infancy to age. From religion the soul obtains its nerve, its inspiration and moral vigour."—BENJAMIN PARSONS.

CHAPTER III.



THE religious condition of England fifty years ago was in many respects widely different to what it is now. The State Church has seen great changes. What it then was has been often told; what it is now can be seen by those who have time and opportunity to mark the operations and trace the influence of the High Church, Low Church, Broad Church, and No Church parties comprehended in the great State ecclesiastical organisation. Slowly and with difficulty, and in spite of the cry "Church in danger," some evils have been swept away, and some improvements effected.

Its reputed enemies have done much to free it from abuses; its true friends have sought to develop and direct its powers for good.

Our present remarks, however, will have reference chiefly to Nonconformists, among whom Mr. Cossham's lot was cast by birth, and with whom, identifying himself by choice, he has continued associated through life. His religious history touches several points of deep interest, and suggests lessons of great value.

The children of Nonconformists have generally some vivid early reminiscences of favourite or remarkable preachers. Among those to whom Mr. Cossham listened as a child was that profound thinker, John Foster, whom he heard preach at King Stanley in 1829, and whose text and manner he has never forgotten. In the end of 1832 or the beginning of 1833, he heard the venerable Rowland Hill, whose remarkable course was then so near its end, preach at Rangeworthy Chapel. The quaint old Farmer Cooke, of Sherstone, often attracted him to his itinerant open-air services, and his young head on one occasion served the preacher as a resting-place for his Bible. These and many other similar circumstances and incidents of his early life left their trace on his memory and character.

At the age of sixteen he passed from the scholar's form to the teacher's seat in the Sunday School of Thornbury Congregational Chapel. His earnestness of purpose and his aptness to teach were apparent, and his mind being evidently influenced by Christian truth, he was much approved and encouraged by his fellow workers. He soon began to take part in the simple opening and closing services of the school "giving out the hymns, leading the prayers, and occasionally enjoying the privilege of giving an address." Thus has many a good and useful public career commenced.

In 1842, at the age of eighteen, he was received as a member of the church. This profession of Christian belief and resolve was voluntarily and intelligently made, and henceforth he stood before his fellow men as an avowed disciple of Christ. It is easy to understand why he would prefer a Congregational community to any other. Congregationalists, both Independents and Baptists, if true to their traditions and principles, are essentially democratic in the organisation and government of their churches. Each fellowship is a little republic. It recognises no lordship in its pastors, teachers and servants. Its members possess equal rights and privileges; social distinctions are obliterated; all are brethren. It acknowledges no external human authority. It chooses its own officers, supports its own institutions, and claims freedom, both civil and religious, for its own members and for all men. With all this the mind and heart of the youth were well prepared to sympathise.

In matters of doctrine some diversities of opinion existed among Congregationalists at that time. Professedly all were Calvinists, the majority holding the tenets of the Genevan teacher in a moderate degree, while in almost every church there was a small number who pushed his dogmas to their extreme limit, and contended for them hard and fast. Young disciples often came into unpleasant and unprofitable contact with some of this latter class. Handel Cossham did not escape; but he was too independent and practical a thinker to become fettered by harsh dogmas, and made into a gloomy and slothful believer in the predestination of a small minority to eternal life, and of a countless majority to everlasting death. He rejoiced in the possibility of salvation for all, and longed for opportunities to encourage his fellow men to be "reconciled unto God." A way was soon opened.

"In September, 1844, partly through the guidance of an old staid local preacher, Mr. George Motley, he was induced, at the age of 20, to preach his first sermon in a little chapel at Cross-ways, near Thornbury, the text being Romans i., verse 16: 'I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.' Twenty years later (in 1864) and again 40 years later (in 1884) he preached in the same place, and from the same text; and while his views as to the Gospel have naturally become enlarged, still he has never ceased to regard that Gospel as the great lever by which the human race is to be raised, and the whole world reformed and regenerated."

His views even as a young man were much clearer and broader than those of most professing Christians. He so read the New Testament as to embrace principles which struck at the very roots of war, slavery, intemperance, priestism, and many other religious, political, and social evils which the Church had not only often tolerated, but in some instances consecrated and glorified. His early friendship with the late Rev. Benjamin Parsons, of Ebley, no doubt, contributed to this result. His intercourse with this strong thinker and earnest worker was most intimate, and his admiration of his character and labours was deep and true. This high regard was reciprocated, Mr. Parsons discerning in him the elements of a noble fellow-worker, and freely extending to him his confidence and affection. It was a remarkable friendship, the relations being not merely those of teacher and disciple, but partaking largely of a fraternal character.

The late Rev. Paxton Hood was privileged in like manner with the friendship of the "Bishop of Ebley," and was thus brought into close acquaintance with Mr. Cossham to their mutual advantage. Could all for which this remarkable trio, in their love for God and man, were longing and labouring forty years ago,

have been accomplished the millennium would have dawned, and righteousness, peace, and joy would now be flooding the earth.

Of what might be strictly called Mr. Cossham's religious labours such as preaching, Bible-class teaching and various efforts connected with the many churches and societies with which in some way he has been associated, it is difficult to present anything like an adequate view. Voluntarily and gratuitously he has done an immense amount of good work. While most of this has been accomplished in his own locality, his labours have extended in almost all directions in other parts of the kingdom, and even beyond the seas. The influence he has thus exerted it is impossible to estimate. His ministrations have been popular. He has always secured attention, conveyed instruction, and made powerful impressions. His selection of subjects is generally happy; often original, and always more or less practical. Of his interesting Bible Class more will be said further on.

It would be unjust to Mr. Cossham to represent him as standing theologically where he did as a young man. It is emphatically true that "his views have naturally become enlarged." Some men so learn everything at once that when they are scarcely out of their teens they are ready to give unfeigned assent and consent to all the articles of some particular creed, and to imagine that henceforth they have nothing either to learn or to unlearn. Mr. Cossham was not of this stamp. He did not dream that he had "already attained." He felt there was room for growth: he resolved to grow, and he certainly has grown.

In days when many both of the clergy and Nonconformist ministers were more alarmed than they even are now, at the advances of Geology and other sciences, he saw the need of preparation for the changes which were inevitably coming. This preparation, he believed, would be found in an intelligent and

reverent, but fearless, search after truth. Of changes resulting from increase of knowledge he had no fear, being fully persuaded that all truth is of God, and that the progress of true science could never be unfavourable to the interests of true religion. He, therefore, gave much earnest attention to these questions, and encouraged and helped others to do the same.

The result, in his own case, of free and fearless inquiry has been an expansion both of mind and heart. His creed has become simpler, broader and happier. In common with thousands of devout and thoughtful men of the present day, he has freed himself from many fetters of prejudice and narrow belief, and gained a liberty unknown to those who are bound by theological systems and ecclesiastical laws. Some of the directions in which he has moved are indicated by a few words from his own pen :—

"I was taught to believe in the verbal inspiration of the Bible ; the certainty of eternal punishment ; and the absolute necessity of a knowledge of and belief in—the atonement of Christ, to salvation. I remember when a boy hearing so much of the anger of God, and His determination to punish, that I was afraid to retire to bed ! But, as years advanced and experience grew, my views expanded. The Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Men, the greatness and far-reaching extent of Divine mercy, the doubtful and uncertain character of the supposed Scriptural references to eternal punishment, and the impossibility of reconciling such a dogma with the Fatherhood of God as taught by Christ, have largely affected my religious life and views.

"I think also less of churches and church organisations. But I think I can say conscientiously that in reference to the great fact of a Supreme Ruler, who not only created, but who guides and governs the universe, my faith is greater than ever. I also believe

most devoutly in our responsibility to Him as our Father, and that we can, and ought, to learn His will as revealed in the Bible, especially in the teaching of Christ; and also from our own inner consciousness and our varied experiences. While I believe in present and future chastisement for disobedience to Divine law, I do not believe that it is either vindictive in character or eternal in duration.

"I believe in the Spirit of God working for God in every man, and trust that eventually all opposition to God and His government will cease, sin and wrong being ended by the triumphs of truth and righteousness. Unless it be so, we must admit that there is a power for evil in the universe greater than the power of Jehovah Himself, and, therefore, that He is not omnipotent! This I cannot admit, and so I believe in the future and final triumph of righteousness and love.

"I think most creeds, and much of our theology, and many of our Church organisations, have been great hindrances to the spread of Christian truth, so that before the world will be converted to Christianity, we shall have to develop a church Christly in spirit and aims, not bound together by unity of *belief*, but one in spirit and purpose."

A volume of choice extracts might be readily gathered from his discourses. It would contain weighty truths clearly and forcibly expressed, many an epigrammatic sentence; occasional touches of humour and pathos, with apt and abounding illustrations from a variety of sources. A report of one of his addresses, delivered at the Sunday evening series of services at Colston Hall, Bristol, in April last, is now before me, and affords a fair specimen of his style. Discoursing on the prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread," he speaks of man's daily wants, and shows that Christ's direction to pray for their supply indicates the value

of the life which has thus to be daily sustained. He then points out that the bread which is so essential for life, and the corn from which it is made, does not grow naturally. "God takes man into partnership in providing for his daily wants. He links His sunshine, His rains, His seasons, and His almighty powers with our industry, our efforts and our limited skill. The labour of the world and the labourers of the world are co-workers with God in this grand purpose of feeding the great family of our Father in Heaven." A knowledge of the means by which human wants are supplied should remove over anxiety and corroding care. And, lastly, among other important lessons which this prayer teaches, he finds the following :—

Certainly we learn that all waste of the food of the people is against the will of God. The use of food in any way that tends to evil and loss is opposed to the will of God. All monopoly and class selfishness that is allowed to keep food from the people is against this prayer. All use of the earth for purposes that prevent the fulfilment of this prayer is wrong. Ruskin says, 'God has lent us the earth for our life, and it is a great entail, and it belongs as much to future generations as those living now.' If so, it is our duty to keep this earth in trust for the benefit of all the generations of men. The fuel which our Father has stored beneath and the productive power with which he has stored the surface is all intended to teach us dependence, gratitude and love. Neither custom nor class interest must be allowed to defeat Heaven's intentions that all should have daily bread. Remembering the facts which we have been considering, may we not join with Bishop Heber, and say—

"O King of earth, and air, and sea,
The hungry ravens cry to Thee ;
To Thee the scaly tribes that sweep
The bosom of the mighty deep ;
Thy bounteous hand with food can bless
The bleak and lonely wilderness,
And Thou has taught us, Lord to pray
For daily bread from day to day."

Mr. Cossham's nonconformity is so pronounced as to be sometimes censured as extreme and uncharitable, indicating ill-will to Churchmen and everything connected with the Establishment. Nothing could be more erroneous. It is his habit to judge of men by their works apart from their creed, and to extend his respect to every worthy man whatever his religious profession. As to institutions, especially public and national ones like the State Church, he feels at perfect liberty both to judge of their merits and also freely to express his opinion. This freedom he exercises, and as a result stands aloof from the Establishment for reasons which he has plainly given, and which may perhaps be thus summarised :—

1. Dissatisfaction with much of its doctrinal teaching, believing it to be unscriptural or irrational, or both.

2. Disapproval of many of its forms and ceremonies, either as savouring of superstition, or as hindering, rather than helping, spiritual and intelligent worship.

3. Want of all sympathy with its elaborate organisation, between which and the simplicity of early Christian churches he sees not merely wide differences but direct opposition.

4. A deep conviction that a Church of Christ should not be supported by State pay, subjected to State control, nor become the recipient of undue and corrupting State favour.

5. An equally deep conviction, founded upon historical research and present observation, that the Establishment has failed, and is failing, to fulfil the great ends for which it professedly exists.

Holding these views, he deems it no breach of charity to express them, at the same time according to all who differ from him the same liberty to express theirs. Again and again has he emphatically declared that over and above all questions of

doctrine, or ritual, or church organisation, he regards love to God and love to man as of supreme and infinite importance.

Since the foregoing was written, Mr. Cossham has been taking part in the organisation of the "Christly Ethical Church." The object of this movement, as explained by its originator, Dr. David Thomas, is to provide a ground on which all who honestly desire to possess the spirit and obey the precepts of Christ may have fellowship, whatever may be their doctrinal opinions. Without interfering with the work of existing churches, or attacking current theologies, it will aim to promote true Christian life and character. At a meeting held in London, in May last, over which Mr. Cossham presided, the Society was formally organised. A number of representative men, Churchmen and Nonconformists, including the Revs. Dr. Clifford, Prebendary Wilson, U. R. Thomas and H. Simon, were formed into a provisional council to carry out its objects.

TEMPERANCE LABOURS.

"All earnest conviction will demand expression. Every moral truth that a man believes has a tendency to convert its believer into its apostle. . . . For example, if a man gets a vivid and an intense conviction of the evils of intemperance and the blessings of abstinence, look what a fiery vehemence of propagandism is at once set to work!"—DR. MACLAREN.

"As I looked at the Hospital wards to-day, and saw that seven out of ten owed their diseases to alcohol, I could but lament that the teaching about this question was not more direct, more decisive, more home-thrusting than ever it had been. . . . It is when I myself think of all this, that I am disposed to rush to the opposite extreme, to give up my profession, to give up everything, and to go forth upon a holy crusade, preaching to all men—*Beware of this enemy of the race.*"—SIR ANDREW CLARK, M.D.

CHAPTER IV.



THE Temperance movement is, beyond all question, one of the greatest and most beneficial reforms of the present century. Its origin, in its pronounced form of total abstinence from all intoxicating drinks, may be dated from about the middle of the reign of William IV., 1833.

Various efforts had from time to time been made to check the excessive drinking habits which through all periods of our national history have been more or less prevalent among all classes of our population. Such legislative measures as were adopted commonly proved

ineffectual. Religious influences were of limited avail. Special means and extraordinary efforts were called for. In 1811, a Society "to check the progress of the alarming and growing evil of intemperance," was formed in Massachusetts. In 1829, the members of this organisation adopted a pledge of abstinence from the use of ardent spirits. The results were beneficial and encouraging, and the influence of the movement was felt in Europe.

"The first Temperance Society in the old world," it is said, "was formed at New Ross, in Ireland" towards the end of 1829; and before the close of 1830, similar societies numbering 14,000 members had sprung up in various parts of Ireland and Scotland. The movement reached England the following year, when the British and Foreign Temperance Society was formed in London. Its principle was that of entire abstinence from ardent spirits and moderation in the use of other intoxicating drinks. Its members in February, 1835, numbered 106,945. Of these Lancashire, which stood first in the list of counties, supplied 29,198, and Gloucestershire, which came fifth, 4,170.

A mighty change had already commenced. It found no favour in the eyes of the writer from whom I have been quoting. "Of late years," he says, writing about 1838, "societies have started on the principle of total abstinence, not from ardent spirits only, but from all wines and fermented liquors. The members of this extreme class, call themselves, absurdly enough, *Tee-totallers*. Of their numbers we have no account, but we suspect their principle interferes too violently with the habits and appetites of the people ever to become permanently popular." This was the spirit in which the infant movement was met by thousands, who ought to have been its helpers and advocates.

But it had its friends, and in Gloucestershire three in particular were distinguished for their early and earnest advocacy of its

claims. Mr. Josiah Hunt, of Almondsbury, was one of these. Mr. Thomas Hudson, in his interesting work, *Temperance Pioneers of the West*, thus sketches this bold yeoman: "Added to amplitude and ponderosity of body, Josiah Hunt was a country gentleman, of intellectual vigour and unmistakable force of character. His delivery as a speaker was energetic, and this, combined with a good clear voice and strong common sense, lifted his addresses above mediocrity." His services were in wide demand, and his valuable testimony was published in a tract called *The Gloucestershire Farmer*. The Rev. Benjamin Parsons was still more active. His labours were untiring; his earnestness was intense. Moved by benevolent zeal, he argued with such force, and declaimed with such vehemence, that the Rev. Henry Welsford, of Tewkesbury, once described his style and manner of speaking as "infernally sublime." Paxton Hood has well told the story of his life in his admirable biography, The *Earnest Minister*. The third of these powerful champions was Mr. Samuel Bowly, of Gloucester, whose name for half a century was prominent in this great reformation.

In 1837, Mr. Cossham, then a boy of 13, listened to temperance speeches from Mr. Bowly, Mr. James Teare, and others. His intelligent and candid young mind responded to their arguments and appeals, so that he embraced the cause with great spirit, and commenced that steadfast course of advocacy which gives him a distinguished place in the front ranks of temperance workers. What his boyish efforts were it is easy to imagine. His first public speech on this subject was made in 1842, at a Wesleyan Chapel, on Milbury Heath, near Thornbury. The young speaker was well received and made a favourable impression, his hearers being none the less pleased because he spoke with youthful modesty, his "eyes being hazy and his voice trembling."

Of Mr. Cossham's long and manifold labours in this great cause since that day, we can only speak in the most general terms. No narrative, however full, could set before us the time, mental energy, bodily strength and hard cash he has willingly expended in public meetings and lectures, in conferences and committees, in conversations and correspondence, in travelling by night and day, and in sustaining and forwarding its operations far and near.

His experiences in this work have been large and diversified and would supply materials for a book of lively interest. One could earnestly wish that he had kept pretty full records of the scenes he has witnessed, the opposition he has encountered, the good he has seen accomplished, the friends with whom he has co-operated, and the thousand and one strange facts which have come under his observation during his fifty-two years of temperance life and labour. Some of his reminiscences cannot but be painful: others yield satisfaction and pleasure.

Among the friendships he formed in this work, that with Mr. Bowly, was especially pleasant. His admiration of the philanthropic Quaker was so great that in early life he was tempted to imitate him in his style as a public speaker, but soon found that it was a case of Saul's armour not suiting David, and that he must do his work in his own way. But he never ceased to admire his persausive oratory; and, as years rolled on, found increasing pleasure in intercourse and co-operation with him; for, widely different as they were in many of their mental characteristics, in spirit and aim, they were largely one. With several others of the most earnest early workers Mr. Cossham was actively and happily associated, as he now is, with most of the present leaders of the cause.

In a brief article, written in 1881, for the *Western Temperance*

Herald, at the request of the Editor, and forming one of a series by different writers on Temperance Experiences, Mr. Cossham says :—

I fear that my temperance experience will lack the interest and stimulus that the experiences of some of my friends will have, because it is entirely one-sided. With the exception of a little new-made cider, which I drank when I was a boy ; and a very small quantity of wine, administered medicinally, under medical advice, in one or two severe illnesses—I have been a total abstainer all my life. For the first seventeen years of my life (with the exception above named) I did not drink because I did not like the smell or the taste of intoxicants. For the last forty years I have been a total abstainer from conviction : first, because I thought it was best for my own health and personal safety ; second, because I believed that my example would be helpful to others, and that it was my duty, for the sake of my country as well as myself, to abstain, During the comparatively long period of my abstaining life, I have had many opportunities of judging as to the wisdom, or otherwise, of using intoxicating drinks ; and I say without hesitation, that the result of that experience and observation is, that if I had the past to live over again, so far as this question goes, I should unhesitatingly adopt the same course. I believe I have had better health, been able to do more work with less fatigue, and have enjoyed life more, as well as avoided many temptations that others have fallen into, in consequence of my abstaining.

This leads me to remark that, calling up the memory of those with whom I started life forty years ago ; most of them have fallen in the race, and, alas ! too many of them have dropped into drunkards' graves. Gratefully would I desire to acknowledge the goodness of God in giving me early to feel an interest in the great temperance movement. I believe, too, that far higher and deeper interests are served by young people being taught, in early life, self-control and self-discipline by abstaining. It helps them in the great work of self-discipline to learn early in life to say "No !" to fashion and appetite, habit and social custom ; and I would strongly advise any who are just entering on the pathway of life, to resolve to keep away from the drink, and I can almost promise them this—that bad company will then keep away from them.

Let me refer to another point, while speaking of early training. My father, who is still living, at the age of eighty-two-, though not a total abstainer when

I first began to take an interest in the question, had the good sense to encourage me in the non-use of intoxicants; and the result was, as previously stated, that before I abstained from principle, I did so from inclination; and am thus able to confirm the view that I have often tried to urge at temperance meetings, namely, that the love of intoxicating drinks is an acquired and artificial taste that is not essential to us; and that, therefore, the great work we have to do is to break down the habit, or rather, prevent the formation of the habit of drinking among our young people; this done, there will be no life-long struggle against the love of drink—as there is in all of us against avarice, sensuality, selfishness, and pride.

Such a testimony should command attention and have great weight.

With his usual sagacity Mr. Cossham sees that in the temperance cause working men might find a social and political lever of immense power. Good in itself as an end, it will also prove good as a means of advancement and reform in many directions. With the spread of sobriety there will be a growth of intelligence; and with an increase of knowledge there will come such an exercise of power as will effect mighty and beneficial changes in society and legislation. Who can tell the extent to which working men made fools by the drink are then used as tools by their enemies to oppose their own true interests? When as a class our toilers "stop drinking and start thinking," not only will reforms be commenced in individuals and families, but many dark, social problems will be solved and many a wise and glorious measure of national legislation will be enacted. Well might the friends of humanity and progress array themselves on the side of the great Temperance Reformation.

Mr. Cossham's friends will be surprised to hear that he has been suspected of midnight conviviality! Returning at sunrise from a long and wearisome sitting in the House of Commons, he met two working men, one of whom, after eying him keenly, turned to his

mate and said, "That cove has been out on the spree all night." On another occasion, on suggesting to the attendant at a Turkish bath, a rather more gentle manipulation, he was met by the sympathetic inquiry, "Headache, sir? A drop too much last night, sir? Shall I get you a drop of brandy, sir?" In the interests of temperance, as well as of his own reputation, he thought it well to put in a plea of "not guilty" to these impeachments.

Mr. Thomas Hudson's references in the work already mentioned, both to Mr. Cossham's venerable father and himself, are so full of truth and interest, that we would gladly quote the whole, but can only find space for the last paragraph. After speaking of the pious memory and temperance labours of the patriarchal parent, he proceeds to briefly sketch the character and career of the son, concluding with these words :—

"Nor are these alone Mr. Cossham's claims to recognition. The honourable gentleman is also a life-long abstainer from alcoholic liquors; and while an active, prominent, and advanced politician, has all along the line boldly and consistently kept his temperance principles to the front, and advocated them far and wide with commanding eloquence and with signal success."

This is the testimony of one who himself an active, and now a veteran, temperance worker, has watched with pleasure the course of his younger fellow-labourer for more than half a century.

POLITICAL CAREER.

"He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God."—*II. Samuel xxiii.* 3.

"All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them : for this is the law and the prophets."—CHRIST : *Sermon on the Mount.*

"Power is but a trust,
And rule, alone, which serves the ruled is just."

WHITTIER.

"What constitutes a state?
* * * * * * *
* Men, high-minded men;
Men, who their duties know,
But know their rights, and knowing dare maintain."

SIR WILLIAM JONES.

CHAPTER V.



POLITICALLY Mr. Cossham has been "a man of war from his youth." Young Hannibal did not more firmly resolve to fulfil his infant vows against Rome than did young Handel those which his juvenile heart had registered against Toryism in all its forms of injustice and oppression. The great majority of boys of that period were ardent politicians. The spirit of Reform then animating the men of the middle and working classes was largely shared by their wives and families. The times were educational;

political subjects were freely discussed in households and workshops, as well as in public places. The rising generation could not fail to be influenced. Among other results there were boys' elections. In the city of Gloucester, for instance, two juvenile candidates were formally nominated, and going to the poll received the votes of their respective supporters, the representative of Reform principles being elected by a large majority, with great enthusiasm. This was but one illustration of the feeling that prevailed throughout the whole country.

The great principles which the boy thus early imbibed became more deeply rooted as his mind expanded and his knowledge grew.

In the six points of the "People's Charter," as framed by Mr. Duncombe and others, and as advocated by Henry Vincent, he saw much that his sense of justice, and his love of freedom approved; and while regretting the course adopted by the physical force party, he deeply sympathised with the wiser and better section of Chartists, who, adhering firmly to their original programme, relied for success upon moral agencies alone.

The Anti-Corn-Law agitation was well fitted to enlist his sympathy, and we find that, while but a youth of eighteen, he was becoming a co-worker with the great leaders of the movement. The occasion was a large and enthusiastic meeting at Stroud, when that town was visited by Messrs. Cobden and Bright. The justice of their cause and the force and eloquence of their reasoning so struck the youth's heart that towards the close of the proceedings, and under the suggestion of Mr. Parsons, he hazarded a short speech. It proved a success, and "earned very hearty and kind commendation from the two illustrious Statesmen;" Mr. Cobden approvingly laying his hand upon him and speaking words of encouragement as to his future career. It was a stimulus which has not yet lost its influence. Encouraged

also by that earnest and mighty labourer in the same cause—Mr. Parsons, his efforts were continued, and his voice was often heard in the villages and towns of lower Gloucestershire denouncing the iniquitous Bread Tax and battling for a cheap loaf.

His public political life was now thoroughly begun. As occasion upon occasion followed when some burning question had to be discussed or some election contest to be fought, he was ever well to the front. Now, in the market place of an old country town, or on the green of a priest and squire-ridden village, bearding Tory lions in their very dens and waking up the people to strike for freedom. Anon, in crowded and stormy meetings of great cities, battling with sturdy opponents, or in the midst of Nonconformist assemblies, telling them the history of their forefathers and instructing them in their rights and duties. Writing for the Press, sitting on committees, guiding the counsels of local organisations, and keeping up a wide correspondence, he was incessantly active and earnest.

He thus soon became known through Gloucestershire and the surrounding districts, and was felt, both by friends and opponents, to be a political influence of heavy calibre. Of course he gave offence and was visited with denunciation. Those who cannot argue can abuse. It requires no stock of reason to revile; and it is easy to relegate those whose arguments cannot be answered, to the ranks of "demagogues," "agitators," "disturbed and restless spirits," and, worst of all, "political dissenters." Is it not sometimes amusing to hear this latter term used with pious horror by clergymen who are the servants of a State Church, and are themselves steeped in politics?

Mr. Cossham's fame spread, and the thoughts of many of his friends turned to him as a fit and proper candidate for Parliamentary work and honours. In April, 1866, he received an

invitation to contest the seat at Nottingham, which the late Mr. Samuel Morley had lost on petition on purely technical grounds. Of the four candidates, two others also were connected with Gloucestershire—Viscount Amberley, son of Earl Russell, at that time Premier, who was Mr. Cossham's Liberal colleague; and Sir George Jenkinson, Bart., of Eastwood Park, near Thornbury, who was the Tory colleague of Mr. Bernal Osborne. The result of the poll was the election of Mr. Osborne and Viscount Amberley. Mr. Cossham made a gallant fight, polling 2,350 votes of the then limited register, and securing in a high degree the admiration and confidence of all classes of his supporters, who subsequently presented him with a magnificent testimonial.

The newly-made borough of Dewsbury, Yorkshire, was the scene of his second candidature. He there stood opposed, in November, 1868, to Sergeant (now Sir John) Simon, who, although an avowed Liberal, yet so unsatisfactorily represented the views of the advanced party that they invited Mr. Cossham to stand for the seat. Their enthusiastic efforts to return him proved unsuccessful; but although he lost the election he gained, as he did at Nottingham, great popularity and an immense number of ardent friends. His election expenses were defrayed by his supporters; and in the February following there were remarkable demonstrations on the occasion of the visit of Mr. and Mrs. Cossham to the town. The rejoicings took the form of soirees, or banquets, with a monster public meeting at the close. The presentations were numerous and interesting, one consisting of a silver salver, weighing over 173 ounces, from the wives and daughters of electors. This was made jointly to Mr. Cossham and his amiable wife, "who had always afforded strong support to her husband in his efforts to improve the moral, political and social condition of the people."

The borough of Chippenham, Wilts, was contested in February, 1874. Success there, at that time, was hardly expected. The locality, notwithstanding the labours of a sturdy and intelligent Liberal party, was traditionally Tory ; and the candidate Mr. Gabriel Goldney whom Mr. Cossham opposed was a local gentleman of influential family and connections. The seat was not gained, but much light was let into the borough, and the people thus prepared for future action in right directions. It is only those who have lived in the smaller towns of rural districts where Toryism has long ruled, who can understand the difficulties with which the friends of progress have to contend.

It was reserved for a new constituency, formed by the operation of the Re-distribution of Seats' Act of 1885, to have the honour of sending him to Parliament. No where was Mr. Cossham better known and appreciated than in East Bristol. It had long been the centre of his life and influence. Politically he was its educator; of many of its social and religious institutions he was an active and generous supporter; and of its chief commercial activities he was a mainspring. It was, therefore, natural that all eyes should turn to him as the representative of this important section of the city and county of Bristol. Opposition, however, was determined on, and Mr. J. B. Bissell was nominated as the Tory candidate. It was a forlorn hope, or rather no hope at all. Mr. Cossham's supporters were in overwhelming force—those in St. George's numbering about ninety per cent. The result was his return by a majority of 2,264.

The strange panic which arose in reference to Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule policy in 1886, and led to his resignation and a consequent General Election, was followed by defection among large numbers of Liberals in all parts of the kingdom. East Bristol did not escape the scare, and the Tories were encouraged

to make another attack upon the seat. It was utterly in vain; their candidate, Mr. Inskip, being defeated by the large majority of 1,736, in spite of the help he received, either in the shape of abstentions from voting, or actual support from dissentient Liberals.

Mr. Cossham's parliamentary course has not been a disappointment to his friends. Its success seemed pretty surely guaranteed by the attitude which the *Times* assumed towards him. That high-principled organ, in its inability to appreciate fearless honesty, and in its hatred of true Liberalism, soon sought occasion against him. Strong feeling is not expended upon trifles; it is not weakness that evokes malice; and, although veiled under thin sneers, it was most plainly strong feeling, bitter as gall, which prompted the *Times* scribes to do what they could to lessen the influence of a man whose character they dared not try to blacken, and whose arguments they could not refute. Since then the world has seen to what lengths such a party print can go in cruel and cowardly attempts to crush the gallant champions of an oppressed people.

It is not Mr. Cossham's practice to speak at great length on any subject before the House, but what he says is to the purpose. His speeches, always dictated by conviction, are marked by clear statement and sound reasoning; and often well illustrated by "porcupine facts" which opponents find it difficult to handle. His varied and extensive commercial knowledge and prompt business habits render him a useful member of Committee. Possessed of fixed fundamental principles by which "proving all things," he tests the right and the wrong, the just and the unjust, his course on most questions can generally be foretold. He has not learned to trim; and can always be counted on as a supporter of any measure which wisely aims at removing any abuse, or achieving any good.

It would be interesting to give extracts from Mr. Cossham's speeches and lectures, setting forth, with more or less fulness, his opinions on great political questions. A brief epitome, however, is all that can be here attempted. As a Liberal of the Liberals, he does not disclaim the name of Radical, understanding by it one who would deal with the very roots of subjects, and legislate not for partial and temporary changes, but for thorough and permanent reforms. In this sense Moses was a Radical when, rejecting the compromises which Pharaoh proposed, he insisted on the total and unconditional emancipation of the Israelites from their Egyptian taskmasters. Nor can we refuse this appellation to John the Baptist, laying, as he did, the axe of righteousness to the roots of evil. It would, indeed, be unjust to withhold it from any of the world's greatest and best reformers. It is neither untrue nor irreverent to apply it to the great Master Himself whose teachings are the most extreme and thorough—the most opposed to unrighteousness and the most potent for good that the world has ever known. Such Radicalism is the highest wisdom. Would it not be wiser to uproot the upas tree than to merely lop its branches? A juggler may try his charming powers upon the cobra, a man of sense will destroy the deadly reptile. If freedom be the inalienable right of every sane and honest man, wisdom and justice demand that he should have it, not in fractions, but by the removal of every fetter from every faculty and every limb.

On all the great questions of our times Mr. Cossham holds advanced opinions. He would have all international disputes settled by arbitration instead of war, believing in the wisdom of Captain Pen rather than in the force of Captain Sword. While an earnest advocate of moral suasion on the great temperance movement he would also employ vigorous legislation to check the

evils of the drink traffic. As a firm believer in religious equality he asks for the liberation of religion from State patronage and control, so that no sect shall have pre-eminence over others, but all shall be alike equal in the eyes of the law. He would give to no class, high or low, unjust advantage over other portions of the community. He is, therefore, opposed to the House of Lords, believing that a House of Peers is no more just than a House of Peasants would be. As a thorough Free Trader he stands opposed to all restrictions on industry and commerce, and believes that it will be for the happiness and prosperity of the nations for the whole world to become an open market where no monoply shall exist and no tolls be levied.

Mr. Cossham is no recent convert to the great cause of Home Rule. In March, 1877, he delivered a singularly able and dispassionate lecture on this subject to the Young Men's Liberal Association at Bath. In commencing he says :—

> I am aware that I shall lay myself open to misrepresentation on account of the title of my paper, as there are many who regard the subject of "Home Rule" as one associated with the severance of the United Kingdom, and the breaking up of the Empire over which the Sovereign of this country rules. It is only candid, however, that I should at once state that this is not my view of "Home Rule." I have no wish to sever the United Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland, but rather desire to cement the bonds by which they are united, and thus to bind them more closely together by removing all just occasions of strife and ill-will. That being honestly the end I seek, I venture to ask that you will hear patiently, and weigh candidly the arguments that I propose to address to you on the subject of Home Rule.

Then follows argument after argument in support of "the right of Ireland to govern and control all matters that are purely Irish and local, with ample security that all National and Imperial questions should be under the guidance of a National and Imperial Parliament, which shall then, as now, represent every

part of the United Kingdom and Ireland." Objections are honestly met and fairly answered, and the lecture closes with this earnest and eloquent appeal :—

As a friend of England as well as Ireland I venture to advocate "Home Rule" in the sense in which I have explained it to-night. I appeal to the honest unprejudiced verdict of English electors to decide this question in favour of local freedom. Justice and self interest, in my opinion, both point in the direction I want to travel. I respectfully ask your candid consideration of the question I have submitted to your notice, and earnestly hope that you will aid in the settlement of this long-standing controversy, and thus help in the realisation of that beautiful prayer so familiar to us all in which we ask, "That God would be pleased to direct and prosper the consultations of Parliament so that all their deliberations may be so ordered and settled upon the best and surest foundations, that peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety, may be established among us for all generations."

The convictions thus expressed twelve years ago, have been deepened by the course of subsequent events. In addition to inquiry and discussion, Mr. Cossham has sought personal knowledge of Ireland and its affairs, by repeated visits to the unhappy land. He has seen coercion inflicting wrong and provoking wrath; he has seen conciliation lessening suffering and awaking gratitude; and of these facts he has made good use both in Parliament and out. It is scarcely necessary to add that his hopes of the triumph of Home Rule are as high as his faith in its righteousness is profound.

As an illustration of his sympathy with one of our own long oppressed classes, and as a sample of the vigour with which he can express his views, I quote the following from a lecture on the Political Events of 1886 :—

So impressed am I with the necessity of improving the condition of the agricultural labourer, and so certain am I that unless it is done the future of our history will be dark and unsatisfactory, that I shall welcome reforms in this direction, come from whom they may. The condition of our rural population

is a disgrace to our civilisation, and a scandal to the Established Church of this country. The clergy ought long ago to have lifted their voice on behalf of these down-trodden sons of toil. They, however, have been engaged in a constantly losing battle in defence of privilege and wealth—and have never, unless under exceptional circumstances, stood to "deliver the needy when he cried, the poor also, and him that had no helper." The time for the deliverance of this neglected class is drawing nigh. The rural labourer has a vote, and in spite of Tory threats, in spite of parsons' influence, and Primrose dames' blandishments, he will gradually, but surely make his voice heard and his influence felt in favour of reform of the Land Laws, reform of the Poor Law, reform of the License Law, reform of the Administration of Charities, and a just application of ecclesiastical revenues. These are the points on which "Hodge" has set his heart, and though at present, speaking politically, he can only "see men as trees walking," he will, under the guidance of experience, and public opinion, be led to send men to represent him who understand his wants and sympathise with his sufferings.

Some of Mr. Cossham's recent political utterances have been marked by especial power and pungency. Addressing the Totterdown Liberal Club, in October last, he reviewed the past Parliamentary Session, and also replied to a recent speech of Sir Michael Hicks Beach. It was an admirable address, bristling with stern facts and common sense arguments, sharply contrasting with the sophistries to which they were opposed. His closing words rang like a trumpet blast, and were received with loud applause. They are worthy of reproduction :—

The talk about "disintegration of the Empire," in which I see Sir Michael still indulged has lost its force. It is an extinct volcano. The Empire has been threatened with disintegration and red ruin at every forward step that has been made during the last fifty years ; but it exists to-day, and is stronger than ever. We mean that Ireland shall not be held, as now, by 35,000 soldiers and 15,000 police, costing the people of this country some £6,000,000 a year, for the purpose of exacting unjust rents for a few landlords. The people are only waiting the opportunity to hurl from power a Government who came in under false pretences, and are doomed to be hurled from power "unwept, unhonoured, and unsung."

Mr. Cossham's political courage and hopefulness are most helpful to his friends. He cannot believe in the defeat of any good and true cause. He looks with confidence for victory in every right struggle. There may be temporary delay and disappointment, but he lives in the spirit of the motto he has adopted :—

"*Truth is great, and will prevail.*"

Such a politician would stand a poor chance with a jury composed of Mr. Worldly-Wiseman, Mr. Facing-both-ways and others of their stamp. They would soon pronounce him a "visionary" and "fanatic," if not "an enemy of law and order," who should be coerced into silence and submission. Yet those who best know him can testify to his profound respect for just laws, and his true love of wise order: and can tell how heartily he joins in the beautiful and comprehensive prayer of Dr. Martineau :—"Deepen the root of our national life in everlasting righteousness; and let not the crown of our pride be as fading flowers; make us equal to our high trusts; reverent in the use of freedom; just in the exercise of power; generous in the protection of weakness . . . . May wisdom and knowledge be the stability of our times; and our deepest trust be in Thee, the Lord of nations and the King of Kings."

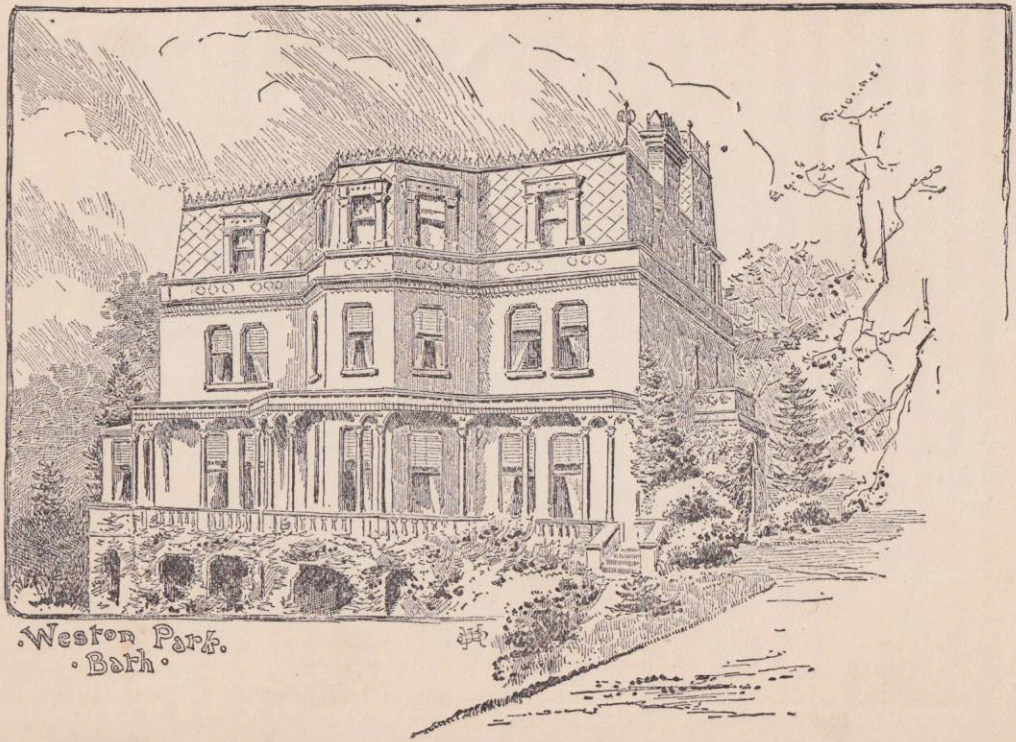
EDUCATIONAL AIMS AND EFFORTS.

"Let us have schools, founded upon a comprehensive basis, free from all sectarian peculiarity, as clear of dissenterism as of churchmanship, open without any distinction, conventional or ecclesiastical, political or religious, open to the admission of all."—WILLIAM BROCK.

"Shine, knowledge, shine with sunlike ray,
Chasing the night of mind away,
And filling earth with Truth's clear day."

CHAPTER VI.

THE spirit which prompted Mr. Cossham as a youth to become a Sunday School teacher, has continued to influence him through life. Our treatment of man will greatly depend upon the views we hold of his nature and destiny. Reason approves the belief that every human being is an intelligent and immortal creature, and that, in the words of the old catechism, "the chief end of man is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever." Mr. Cossham could take no lower view either of himself or his fellow-men. In every member of the human family, however debased and depraved, he saw a child of God, the possessor of



·Weston Park.
·Bath·

powers of thought, action and enjoyment which are capable of glorious development and everlasting exercise. With all such fellow-beings he felt himself to be one, his relation to them being that of a brother who, according to his ability, is under obligation to help them in realising the great ends for which they are created. It is the true view, without which the philanthropist becomes but a patron and the evangelist but a Pharisee.

Thus deeply convinced of man's high capacities, he was as deeply convinced of the right of every man to such a training as should develop his powers and direct them to wise and useful action. Equally deep, too, were his convictions of the beneficial results which would follow good early education. He saw that it lay at the foundation of right character, domestic happiness, and social stability. Ignorance, as associated with sin, he regarded as a reproach to any people; while knowledge, as essential to righteousness, he deemed necessary to the true exaltation of a nation.

Influenced by these principles he found pleasure in the work of instruction and early proved himself "apt to teach." As he found joy in the acquisition of knowledge, so he did in its communication whether to child or adult. The furtherance of popular education engaged his sympathies and received his support at a period when it was regarded with much less favour than at present. He entered deeply into the educational hopes and plans of his friend, Mr. Parsons, from whom, doubtless, he received many a powerful impulse and many a practical suggestion in the good work.

Among the results there are some especially worthy of record. In the early part of his mining career, Mr. Cossham was connected as an employé with the colliery on Yate Common. While diligent in the discharge of his duties, he was also concerned for the

welfare of the work-people, and interested in the instruction of their neglected children. Preaching and teaching among them on Sundays and at other times, he felt the need of a school where the young could have good instruction through the week. With characteristic earnestness he resolved upon the establishment of a British School, and enlisting aid he had the pleasure of laying the foundation stone of a substantial building for this purpose in September, 1850, and seeing the school in operation the following year. Of the thirty-eight years of good and useful work done by this institution, the people of the locality can best tell. There, as its founder and liberal helper, the name of Handel Cossham will long be remembered.

In 1853 he was the means of building an Infant School at Pucklechurch; and in 1855 he erected British Schoolrooms at Parkfield, near one of his collieries; and has sustained the work of education there ever since. About the same time he largely helped to build a British School at Mangotsfield and for a quarter of a century assisted to keep it in working. For many years he also aided a similar institution at Staple Hill. The people's appreciation of these efforts for their mental and moral elevation have been again and again gratefully expressed, often in public and most gratifying ways.

Mr. Cossham's love of his native town, and his solicitude for the welfare of its children, found expression in the erection of a British School at Thornbury, in 1862. It was the year in which the Nonconformists of England and Wales commemorated the Bi-centenary of the ejection of the two thousand clergymen who refused compliance with the Act of Uniformity, in the reign of that "most religious sovereign Charles II." Pulpit, platform, and press were employed to set forth the facts of history and the great principles of Nonconformity. It was a period of much controversy,

in which many prominent Nonconformists bore themselves bravely. Mr. Cossham was one of the most active, crowning his numerous labours by building this schoolroom in commemoration of the great historical event, and devoting it to unsectarian educational uses. It is gratifying to know that this institution under wise management and good teachers, has proved the means of affording sound elementary instruction to those for whose benefit its founder especially designed it—the children of Nonconformist parents.

Looking back fifty years, some of us can remember how in some quarters popular education was ridiculed and opposed. Since then, as the result of voluntary effort, earnest discussion, and practical legislation, it has made marvellous progress. It is impossible to fully set forth the changes which have been wrought. A few statistics, however, are worthy of note.

In 1870 the number of schools inspected was 10,949, with an average attendance of 1,453,531. In 1880 the number of schools had risen to 20,670, and the attendance to 3,155,534. The report for 1887 shows that "there has been good advance made everywhere." The number of children on the Register amounts to 4,635,184, with an attendance of 3,527,381. The number of teachers has enormously increased; and it is satisfactory to know that their salaries have risen, a proof that their work is both successful and appreciated. Mr. Mundella has pointed out that unsectarian schools are especially thriving.

With free inquiry and enlarged experience knowledge has grown and views expanded, so that in many respects the most earnest friends of education have undergone some changes of opinion as to principles and systems. It has been so with Mr. Cossham. "I always felt," he says, "that without education the people cannot rise. At first I hoped to reach the national wants

by voluntary schools without State aid. But more than twenty years ago I became convinced that this could not be done. Since then I have tried to guide the system of education into a truly national and unsectarian channel; and bring its benefits within the reach of all. This, however, I believe, will never be fully done till all our education is unsectarian and *free;* and to that point we are tending with rapid strides."

In addition to Mr. Cossham's early efforts in the Sunday School, he has for more than forty years been a devoted Bible class teacher. The journal of Mr. David Griffin, now City Missionary at Gloucester, who from 1862 to 1865, laboured as an Agent of the Gloucestershire Scripture Readers' Society at Mangotsfield and the neighbourhood, gives some interesting glimpses of Mr. Cossham's life at that period. From entries, made at the time, we learn that at half-past nine on Sunday mornings, he had a Bible class in a little reading room which he had made from a cottage in Mangotsfield. Here he was accustomed to meet from 15 to 30 of his own workmen, some of whom had to spell through the harder words of the lesson. At the close of the class he would either conduct the service at the little chapel or listen to a poor local preacher who worked in his pit. Then, on some occasions, particularly in the fall of the year 1863, when fever was prevailing in the neighbourhood and many died, instead of going home to dinner he would take a few biscuits, and for two or three hours visit among the sick and poor. An address to the Sunday School children followed, and then, after taking tea with some villager, he would proceed to one or other of the adjoining parishes to preach at some chapel or schoolroom.

From these simple records a number of interesting extracts could be made telling of large and happy gatherings of teachers and children of Sunday and Day Schools at Shortwood Lodge; of

helps to the Band of Hope movement; and of constant acts of kindness and liberality; all expressive of the deep interest which both Mr. and Mrs. Cossham felt, not in the happiness and welfare of the young only, but also in that of their instructors.

In furnishing these facts Mr. Griffin, whose testimony will be valued by all who know him, adds, "I have never met with any one who, with the ability, possessed in larger degree the *disposition* to aid in every good cause, than Mr. Cossham. May it be the Divine Will to preserve him yet many years to labour for the social, moral and spiritual good of his fellows."

The Bible class work underwent a further development on Mr. Cossham's removal to Weston Park, near Bath. In a spacious room, erected for the purpose, comfortably furnished, and provided with an excellent organ, admirably played, he meets every Sunday afternoon a class of between 150 and 200, chiefly young people. The methods employed are well fitted to sustain interest and afford a great amount of instruction. Consecutive portions of the Scriptures are sometimes taken as lessons so that whole books are thus brought under examination. At other times the teaching of Old and New Testament is brought to bear upon some moral, social or political question. Believing that every subject should be looked at in the light of truth, Mr. Cossham makes his Biblical expositions eminently practical. Principles of everlasting righteousness are used to test the good or evil of every day life. The great truths of justice and mercy, peace and love, as taught by Prophets and Psalmists, and especially as illustrated and enforced by Christ and His Apostles, are applied to individual conduct, social customs, business practices, and Governmental policy. Nothing is deemed too mean for notice; nothing too great for inquiry.

Some illustrations of this will be given in the next Chapter.

EDUCATIONAL AIMS AND EFFORTS

(Continued).

"Because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge."—SOLOMON: *Ecclesiastes xii., 10.*

"Deeper, deeper let us toil
In the mines of knowledge;
Nature's wealth and Learning's spoil
Win from school and college;
Delve we there for richer gems
Than the stars of diadems."

JAMES MONTGOMERY.

CHAPTER VII.

PAXTON HOOD, describing Benjamin Parsons as a religious teacher who made Christian truth bear upon political questions, says, "He *was* a Political Preacher. He taught men their duty to the State, he expounded the relation of the State to the People; but the burden of all his Political Sermons was the Apostolic injunction: 'Act the citizen. Be such a Politician as becometh the Gospel of Christ.'" These words may be fairly applied to Mr. Cossham. A few specimens of the manner in which he makes religious truth bear on civil matters, may be taken from his Bible Class lessons.

When in the summer of 1884, the conduct of the Peers forced upon the country the still pending question of "mending or ending" the House of Lords, Mr. Cossham chose for his subject on Sunday, July 27th, "Bible teaching as to the duty of the people towards unruly rulers." In the course of clear and vigorous exposition of various passages of Scripture, he proved that good Government is necessary to the welfare of the people, and that whoever, whether among the ruled or the rulers, acts unjustly should be resisted, and, if possible, restrained. Of the unruly Peers he spoke in the following plain but truthful terms :—

I will not trouble you to-day with the details of the working of the hereditary principle in the past history of our country, but I may say this, speaking broadly and generally, our hereditary legislators have been the uniform enemies of national progress—the upholders of every abuse in Church and State, the opponents of education and religious liberty for the people. They have been the upholders of slavery, the enemies of commerce and industry, and the opponents of every reform that has tended to humanise our criminal laws, lighten the burden of the people, and make the laws of the nation more humane—just and Christian. The men who are created legislators by the accident of birth do not answer to Samuel's description. They are not as a rule either just, nor do they rule in the fear of God, and it has become a Christian duty in my opinion to resist them, and resolve to break down the hereditary principle that is not allowed to work in any other country, and has worked so badly in our own.

His protest against selfish class legislation is equally strong :—

I find, he says, that history has written, in language that none can afford to despise, that in all cases where men have sought to act simply in the interest of their class, and in opposition to the general good, they have ruined and overwhelmed their own class, and if not resisted ruined the nations whose interests they have trampled on. It was the nobles and landholders of France who brought upon that country the evils of the Revolution of 1792, and that has left the French nation a prey to almost constant revolutions ever since. The nobles, linked with the priesthood and the King, have ruined Spain. It

is the great landlords of Russia that are now keeping that country in constant fear of plots and assassinations. It is landlordism and priestism that have caused us so much trouble in Ireland, and it is the unrighteous claims of our irresponsible and grasping landlord class that are constantly bringing us as a nation within measurable distance of revolution and strife. If we are to lead 'quiet and peaceable lives' the power of this class must be constitutionally curbed and their power for mischief lessened; they must be bound with legal fetters of iron.

With all this a large amount of wholesome practical teaching was combined.

On another occasion, during his Mayoralty of the city of Bath, his subject was that of "Bible Teaching Relative to Civic Duties." Starting with the principle that every position in life has its duties and responsibilities, he proceeded to set forth those which devolve upon our Municipal authorities, and the spirit in which they should be fulfilled. It was maintained that the civil magistrate may be as truly the minister of God as the preacher or the priest; and that the administration of justice, the preservation of peace, the carrying out of sanitary reforms, and other secular duties, may be as really the doing of the Divine will as the performance of any so-called sacred works.

The Parnell Commission furnished a lesson for Sunday, March 4th, 1889, when the subject was "Bible Teaching Relative to a *National Policy based on Forgery and Lying*." In reference to the frequent frustration of evil designs, and the many instances in which cruel and crafty Hamans get hanged upon their own gallows, Mr. Cossham forcibly presented the great truth that behind all things human in national life, there is a Living and True God working for righteousness. He then urged his hearers to determine that their Christianity shall be something more and better than mediæval creeds, unreasonable and absurd dogmas, and to seek to infuse into all classes and all sections of

society the love of truth, a strict regard for justice, and to always support a policy that shall have for its object the happiness of the greatest number.

Social questions are freely dealt with, and various forms of evil are exposed and denounced. "Bible Teaching Relative to the Fascinations and Dangers of Gambling and Betting" was the subject suggested by the prosecution of peers, publicans, and pugilists for violation of the law in West End clubs, in May last. Basing his remarks chiefly upon the words of the old Hebrew prophet, Jeremiah—"He that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at the end shall be a fool"—Mr. Cossham taught many impressive lessons and delivered many earnest warnings in connection with this wide-spread evil. "What," he asked, "was the foundation of gambling?" Mainly, no doubt, a desire to make a short cut to wealth. Men wanted to get rich by a stroke of good luck. They were not satisfied with the slow but honourable task of seeking what they needed by industry and thrift. . . Happy that youth who never lost touch with home and home life. How full of danger was the path that leads from home to the drinking saloon, the gaming table, and the haunt of dissipation. That path might look fascinating, but the end was ruin, darkness, and death. I once heard a noble mother say that "she would rather see her son go *under* the turf than *on* it." Gambling was nearly always associated with dodgery, deception, and selfishness. It involves unhealthy excitement, leads to ill-temper, disputes and violence, and often ends in suicide and untimely death."

On questions of doctrine Mr. Cossham is not dogmatic. As a thoughtful man he has his own convictions, many of which are deep and abiding; but he sees that there are many questions on which equally earnest minded inquirers may arrive at widely

different conclusions. He, therefore, does not attach great importance to doctrinal creeds; and consequently does not attempt to force all thought into the same channels and shape all minds in one mould. Listening to his teaching Doctors of Divinity would pronounce him unskilled in theological hair-splitting; and holders of narrow creeds, which are imagined to contain all truth, would be horrified at the way in which he encourages all inquirers to think for themselves, so that faith and reason may, as far as possible, dwell together. It is edifying to hear his frank confessions of ignorance on many points on which thousands of our religious guides boldly dogmatise.

There are, however, points on which Mr. Cossham's testimony is most persistent and emphatic. One of these is the supremacy, wisdom and righteousness of Divine law both in the natural and the moral world. "The Lord reigneth" is to him no mere poetic imagination. He finds abounding proofs that "Jehovah hath prepared His throne in the heavens: and that His Kingdom ruleth over all." Hence he believes and teaches that whatever clouds and darkness may be round about the eternal throne, righteousness and justice are its foundations. All things work, however darkly and slowly, to the ultimate triumph of truth and love. Hence, too, he believes in the inseparable connection between violations of Divine law and the experience of some pains and penalties. As Solomon taught, so he teaches, that "the way of transgressors is hard;" and that "whosoever breaketh a hedge, a serpent shall bite him." With Paul he emphatically sets forth the solemn truth that, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Of this he is profoundly convinced—that—

Whatever may be false in creed,
Whatever vain in rite,
To God and man, in word and deed,
Righteousness is right.

Any account of Mr. Cossham's educational labours should include some reference to his popular lectures. It is impossible to estimate the number which he has delivered. In city, town, and village, to audiences composed of all classes, he has set forth principles and facts on a great variety of subjects. By these means he has diffused an immense amount of useful and interesting information, called attention to many neglected subjects, excited in thousands of young minds a thirst for knowledge, and afforded to multitudes of hearers pleasant and wholesome recreation. It is scarcely necessary to add that these, like all his other efforts for the public good, have been "labours of love," often accomplished with more or less of self-sacrifice.

It is pleasant to record that the gratitude of his interesting Bible Class found some expression on October 1st, 1889, when, in response to an invitation from Mr. Cossham, nearly 200 of the members journeyed from Bath to spend a social afternoon at Holly Lodge. Availing themselves of the opportunity, they tendered him their hearty thanks for his kind efforts for their moral and spiritual welfare, and presented him with a beautiful silver inkstand, bearing the following inscription :—"Presented to Mr. Cossham by the members of his Weston Park Bible Class."

WIDE SYMPATHIES.

"God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean."—PETER : *Acts x.* 28.

"God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth."—PAUL : *Acts xvii.* 26.

"Slav, Teuton, Kelt, I count them all
My friends and brother souls,
With all the peoples, great and small,
That wheel between the poles."

TENNYSON.

"Surely, it is a characteristic of a great and liberal mind, that it recognises humanity in all its forms and conditions."—LONGFELLOW.

CHAPTER VIII.



IF love of native land and zealous labours for its best interests constitute patriotism, then Mr. Cossham is entitled to take his stand in the front rank of true British patriots. Such patriotism is not inconsistent with universal philanthropy. While fellow-countrymen can be loved as fellow-countrymen, man can be loved as man, whatever the colour of his skin or the land of his birth. The sympathies of the truly benevolent heart will not find it difficult to embrace the suffering child at home and the suffering nation

beyond the seas. Mr. Cossham's concern for the suffering and oppressed in England has not prevented his caring for oppressed Irish peasants and wronged Scotch crofters. Nor does his deep interest in the affairs of Britain lessen his solicitude for the welfare of any people, colony, or tribe, upon the face of the earth. Looking back we find that as events have transpired, and occasion arisen, he has shown himself the friend of man in all parts of the globe. He has ever sympathised with sorrow and suffering, with resistance to injustice, with aspirations for freedom, with struggles for liberty. He has pitied weakness, deplored ignorance, encouraged the diffusion of knowledge, aided the spread of Christianity, sought to avert the curse of war, and laboured for the triumph and reign of peace among all nations.

His efforts in the cause of peace have been numerous and long continued. Associated from early life with the Peace party, he has boldly and consistently maintained his opinions. To every war that has occurred in his time he has stood opposed. Convinced of the folly and cruelty of war, he has denounced the appeal to the sword, whether made by Tory or Liberal governments. The more excellent way of international arbitration has ever had his warmest advocacy. As a fellow-labourer with John Bright, Joseph Sturge, Samuel Bowly and a small band of like-minded Christian philanthropists, he often found himself one of a very small minority, and felt that his voice was but as that of one "crying in the wilderness." His testimony was, nevertheless, continued. With strong arguments and burning words he set forth the sin and senselessness of resorting to brute force for the settlement of disputes which calm and reasonable discussion could quickly and satisfactorily arrange. Earnestly has he pleaded for wisdom and justice in our treatment of our Colonies, in our government of India, and in all our dealings whether with

Zulus and Arabs, or civilised nations of Europe. He has not hesitated to teach that the ethics of the New Testament are as applicable to the conduct of nations as of individuals; and that to every government, as well as to every man Christ, says, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you do ye even so unto them."

It is easy to denounce such zeal as fanaticism; but is there any good reason why such counsels of peace and righteousness should not have prevailed, and if they had, what then? We should have avoided the disastrous Crimean war with its terrible destruction of life, its infliction of suffering, and its waste of property. The mutiny in India would, doubtless, have been averted. Our miserable contentions with feeble nations and barbarous tribes in Asia and Africa could have been settled without "shooting them down like rabbits." Opium and strong drink traffic would be suppressed, helps to civilisation would be supplied, commerce would be conducted on just and equitable principles, and our rule and influence would be that of friends and brothers rather than that of masters and oppressors.

The great war between the Northern and Southern States of America, which commenced in 1861 and raged till 1865, not only developed the Toryism of Tories, but sharply tested the Liberalism of many Liberals. The attempt of the Slave States of the South to form an independent Confederation, in which slavery could still be carried on, evoked the sympathy of certain parties in England. The *Times*, true to its traditions, gloating over the fratricidal strife, and rejoicing in the disorder and probable overthrow of American Republicanism, laboured hard to secure the moral, if not the material support of England for the Slave owners. Ignorance of American institutions and people was then much greater than it is now, and not only Tories, but even many

Liberals blinded by prejudice sympathised with the South. At length, even Lord John Russell announced the intention of the Government to formally recognise the Southern Confederacy as a belligerent power, and not as a mere body of rebels. The opposition to this action was led by Mr. Bright, who, with a few others in Parliament and outside, advocated a policy of strict neutrality, and strongly denounced everything that afforded the least show of encouragement to the rebellion.

Mr. Cossham, as a devoted friend of the North, and an intense hater of the aims and policy of the South, put forth great efforts to enlighten his fellow-countrymen as to the real issues of the conflict. His lecture—entitled *America: Past, Present and Future*—delivered in a great many places, was published in March, 1863, and most extensively circulated by Emancipation Societies in London and Manchester. It thrilled thousands of hearts, and changed the absurd opinions of many ignorant friends of the South. A second lecture, frequently delivered, and at length published in April, 1864, did like good services. It was entitled, *The American War: Facts and Fallacies*, and proved and exposed the misrepresentations and sophistry of Southern advocates.

These powerful and generous helps were highly appreciated by the Federal States. One of their periodicals, *The Federal American Monthly*, devoting an article to "Handel Cossham, Esq.," as one of the "Friends of America in England," and, referring to the lecture just mentioned, says .—

We cannot refrain from quoting the conclusion of this eminently logical and earnest lecture. It is a strong "protest," and an affectionate appeal to his countrymen. Its simple eloquence sounds likes the notes of a dirge of sorrow blending with a hymn of victory; and as the expressive Saxon words are uttered by his strong and commanding voice, the multitude cheer for the North, whilst the haggard form of treason against God and man shrinks into

outer darkness! Listen, O Americans! to the throbbing heart of one of your truest friends who breaks his bread on English soil. He says:

"I now leave the subject with you. I speak plainly, because I feel deeply on the question. I confess I am pained to see a want of sympathy between this country and America. There are men, and organs of public opinion, on both sides of the Atlantic, who seem bent upon setting, if possible, these two great Anglo-Saxon nations at variance and war. Gentlemen, I protest against this course. No man can commit a greater crime against both countries than to misrepresent them, and thus help to produce discord and strife. We ought to try and keep peace with the world; but we ought especially to try and keep peace with America—and America ought to do the same with England. There must be no strife between us—"we are brethren." What I ask then, to-night, is perfect and absolute neutrality on the part of our Government. I do not ask that our Government should lend a particle of material aid to the North, and I protest against their rendering the slightest to the South. Our motto should be neutrality from the Government and moral sympathy for the North from ourselves, in the great struggle in which they are engaged."

Thus spoke this God-fearing man, who believes (in the words of Lancashire's sweetest poet)

> God judgeth justly, and will bring
> Grief for the mischief that we do;
> We cannot do an evil thing,
> But we shall suffer too.

On the triumph of the North, and the conclusion of the war, Mr. Cossham with his friend, Sir Samuel Morton Peto, Bart., (then M.P. for Bristol), visited America in 1865. He was everywhere well received, and had opportunities of intercourse with most of the leading men in the States. Expressions of esteem and admiration came from many quarters. One, which he especially prizes, is an oaken staff, made from a rafter of John Brown's cottage, and presented to him by the ladies of New York. "I look at this memento," says Mr. Cossham, "when I am getting disheartened in any struggle for truth and freedom, and the sight of it revives my hope and courage."

In a congratulatory soirée of the Bristol Emancipation Society, shortly after Mr. Cossham's return, he gave some account of his American experiences. It was a remarkable occasion. A large number of representative men were present and the proceedings were most enthusiastic. Even at the distance of nearly a quarter of a century it is heart-stirring to read the facts and sentiments with which the address abounded. The feeling of the great assembly found expression in a speech of the Rev. W. James, who proposed a vote of thanks for the "earnest, eloquent and able address" that had been given, and in conclusion said that "they wished to tell Mr. Cossham that night that they welcomed him back to Bristol, that they rejoiced to see him in such excellent health and spirits, that they were glad he returned with the same interest and vigour to the same philanthropic walk in which he had travelled before, and they hoped that he might be spared for many years to come to labour for the good of his fellow-man."

To the foregoing facts others of deep interest can now be added. A short time before the death of Mr. W. E. Forster, he spent some time at Bath for the benefit of his health. While there he was one evening the guest of Mr. Cossham, at Weston Park, where a number of friends were invited to meet him. The conversation having turned on the American War, Mr. Forster spoke with much feeling of the great danger this country had been in of declaring in favour of the Slave States. Turning to Mr. Cossham, and referring to his labours as well as to his own, on the side of the North, he said, "You don't know how narrowly we escaped being committed to the support of the South, and how near we were to the verge of war with the North. But," he added emphatically, "you will know—the facts will come to light some time."

They have now come to light. In the "Life of Lord John

Russell," by Mr. Spencer Walpole, we see that both Lord John and Lord Palmerston strongly inclined to take sides with the Confederates, and would have done so, but for the efforts of Lord Granville, who used his influence just in time to avert what must have proved a frightful blunder and calamity.

Mr. Cossham and his fellow workers, during that critical period, might justly look back to their efforts with deep satisfaction, and are entitled to the gratitude of the nation which they sought to save from evil doing and disaster. Had the counsels of the *Times* and the war party prevailed how different and how terrible would have been the results!

Further illustration of Mr. Cossham's wide sympathies may be seen in his visits to some of the oppressed districts of Ireland in the autumn of 1888. His records of his first personal experiences of Irish evictions awakened feelings of intense indignation in the hearts of thousands of humane Englishmen, and powerfully helped the cause of Home Rule. I quote a portion of his sad narrative, hoping to give yet further publicity to facts which set forth the working of the cruel and infamous Coercion Laws by which a Tory government, aided by so-called Liberal dissentients, are attempting to crush the national aspirations of a long oppressed people. After describing a scene near Callon, where, on the estates of Lord Massereene, a large number of evictions were to take place, he says :

I found everywhere the same tale. The rents, when they can get before the Courts, are reduced, but as the law does not allow them to go to the Court till all back rents are paid, the poorest and weakest tenants in Ireland cannot get the benefit of the Land Act. I saw half a mile in front of me what looked like a regiment of soldiers, and I was told this was the evicting party. So I drove on, and finding my car could not follow up the narrow lane I left it behind and walked up to a cottage or hut, occupied by one Patrick Neviss, a poor man, who had been bedridden for some two years, and was lying helpless on a bed

in one corner of the room. Seventy policemen were standing round the house and some 20 or 30 Emergency men—sheriff's officers, men with hammers and hatchets—were also there ready to overcome any resistance that this poor helpless man and his daughters might offer. I found the priest—Father Taff—pleading with the officers of the law for mercy towards this poor sick man, and I ventured to add my plea to that of the priest, and at last it was agreed that he could or would pay £11 of the arrears claimed, which was, the sick man declared, every farthing he had, if they would give him a discharge to last May. The bargain, I am glad to say, was made. The poor man's last shilling was cleared out. The good priest and myself gave him a trifle to start life with again, and we came away with the knowledge that at any rate one poor man had been saved for a time from the destroyers.

Marching orders were issued, and away went the 100 representatives of the law, attended by land agents, sheriff's officers, &c., for about a mile to the hut of James Dunne.

I was told on the road that this was a very bad case, and that eviction must positively take place here. Father Taff opened the door of the hut, and I followed in with the land agents, head police officers, &c., and, oh! what a sight met the eye here. In the chimney corner sat the tenant who was to be evicted—an old man over 80 years of age—bent and tottering. A bit of peat was burning on the hearth, most of the smoke from which came into the room, where I could dimly see several young men, whom I understood to be sons of the old man, and one or two women, who, I presume, were daughters or daughters-in-law. I had never looked upon such a sight and such a home before. One hundred and thirty pounds was the amount demanded, and I could well believe the declarations of the old man and his sons that they "were really destitute"; but they said there was about £65 worth of crops on the land, and they could and would sell all they had and pay not less than £65 by December 1st, and more if the crops yielded more. But the agent explained that his orders were definite, and he could take no less than the £130. So the eviction began. The emergency men brought out the few bits of furniture, which certainly were not worth more than £2 or £3. "I have lived here," cried the old man, "all my life; I have lived here under four generations of Singleton's, and this is how I am served at last. I have always paid the rent in the past, when I could," he passionately added, "and they know it; but they are going to turn me out to die." The loud cry of the

women, mingled with the wail of the old man, was more than I could stand, and I had to leave before the occupants were actually turned out. But all this is done in presence of nearly 100 policemen and legal officials, most of whom are paid out of the taxes of the United Kingdom, and the whole thing done in the name of the Queen and the people of the United Kingdom. "You will not be surprised," continues Mr. Cossham, "that I registered a vow, both as a member of Parliament and a British citizen, to do my level best to take out of the hands of Irish and other landlords the power to waste the national taxes and tarnish the British name by deeds of this kind. I have only to add that these evictions are being carried out on an estate where the Plan of Campaign had not been adopted, and gives the negative to the statement so often made by supporters of the coercion policy, namely, that the Plan of Campaign is responsible for evictions."

The death of poor old James Dunne, which quickly followed, was thus described by the *Glasgow Herald* of October 13th.

He had paid rent for 60 years, but was now utterly unable to meet the landlord's claims. He was suffering from bronchitis, and presented a miserable spectacle as he crouched before his kitchen fire. He warned the evictors if the process of the law was carried out it would result in his death. Despite his entreaties he was put out upon the roadside and left sitting on a stool, in the midst of his broken furniture. When the evictors left a passer-by heard the old man exclaim, "Emerson, Emerson, get me the poor-house van, for God's sake. I have not a half hour to live." He was removed to a barn at hand by some friends, and at about nine o'clock last night expired.

Surely the time will come when Englishmen will look back upon such scenes with wonder and indignation; and especially when many, who, while loudly professing and calling themselves Christian philanthropists, have approved of these evil doings, will remember the past with sorrow and shame.

Holyrood Palace.

BUSINESS LIFE.

"*Laborare est orare*—to work is to pray, if the work be done from a right motive. The bells that jingle in the wagoner's team may bear the same inscription as blazed on the High Priest's mitre, 'Holiness to the Lord.'"

DR. MACLAREN.

—"Man, heedless of a God, counteth up vain reckonings,
Fearing to be jostled and starved, by the too prolific increase of his kind;
And asketh, in unbelieving dread, for how few years to come
Will the black cellars of the world yield unto him fuel for the winter."

MARTIN TUPPER: *Proverbial Philosophy.*

CHAPTER IX.



IT was a wise law among the Jews that every boy should be trained in some employment by which he could earn his living. No man deemed it ignoble to work. The great Master was the son of a carpenter, and was a carpenter Himself. The father of Handel Cossham early trained his son to the use of tools, and at the age of eleven the little lad was learning to make himself useful. His own reference to this on a certain public occasion was most interesting. Speaking at the meeting when he presented "Cossham Hall" to his native town, he showed a carpenter's rule and told how his father had given him this instrument while engaged in some work on that very spot in 1835.

Opportunities of learning were not lost. Handicraft skill was acquired, and at the same time attention was directed to the principles of mechanical science, architecture and engineering. Longings for a wider sphere of action were felt, and in 1845, at the age of twenty-one, he went as clerk to Yate colliery, at a salary of less than £100 a year. He now studied mining diligently, working at it almost night and day. While gaining knowledge and experience he developed such business capacity as enabled him to make rapid way.

In 1848, having married Miss Elizabeth Wethered, of Little Marlow, he entered into partnership with the father of that lady—Mr. William Wethered, and her three brothers Messrs. Joseph, Henry, and Edwin Wethered, and commenced colliery enterprises, first at Parkfield, in the parish of Pucklechurch, and later, also at Kingswood, near Bristol. The energy and intelligence with which the work was carried on rendered it remarkably successful; the firm acquired a high reputation, and Mr. Cossham, with whom the management mainly rested, was acknowledged to be an able, enterprising and a rising man. His geological knowledge, untiring energy, and excellent business habits, together with the satisfactory terms he maintained with his workpeople, all contributed to his success.

In 1879, the firm was formed into a Limited Company, the Wethered family selling out the interest which they had held up to that time. The great concern now almost entirely belongs to Mr. Cossham, as the shares which are in other hands, are limited in number, and are chiefly held by the older members of his staff, together with Mr. Charles S. Wills, a son of his old friend the late Mr. H. O. Wills, of Bristol.

The Collieries, which are four in number, are known as *Parkfield*, *South Parkfield*, *Speedwell*, and *Deep Pit*, the two

former being in the parish of Pucklechurch, and the two latter in that of St. George. They have been so developed as now to comprise about 3,000 acres of freehold mineral property, yielding a daily output of from 700 to 1,000 tons of steam and house coal, and giving employment to an average of 1,500 work-people. Lying near the Midland Railway, with which they are connected by good lines worked by two powerful engines, named *Speedwell* and *May Flower*, transit operations are carried on with great facility.

On a recent occasion Mr. Cossham entertained the members of the "Field and Discussion Society" in connection with Trim Street Unitarian Chapel, Bath. Responding to an expression of thanks, he pleasantly referred to his business career in the following terms :—

May I venture to say to the younger members of this Field and Discussion Class, try and find amusement, interest, and excitement in your daily calling. Believe me, there is no sphere of life in which an intelligent and thoughtful man may not find enjoyment in his calling in life, if he go behind and beneath the mere drudgery of his task. (Hear, hear.) My calling in life made it possible, and I think I may say needful, for me to study machinery, mechanics, geology, and mining, and I can truly say that, apart from all pecuniary interest I may have in the successful application of these branches of human knowledge, the intense personal pleasure I have derived, especially from the study of the natural problems I have had to face, has been immense. It was in the year 1845 that I first came to "try my luck" in connection with the working out of some of the vast mineral resources that lie concealed from view in this part of the Bristol basin. I had then small means, little experience, and no special talent that I knew of, but I entered on my task with an earnest resolve to do my best, to exercise self control, constant industry, and manfully to face and overcome every difficulty. It would be egotistical and uninteresting for me to trace the steps by which I have so far succeeded in my life's work. This coalfield has been, and is, a very complicated one. It is very difficult to read and understand, and much more difficult to describe and make clear to others. When I came here in 1845

geology, as a science, was young, and this coalfield, owing to its complicated character, had been very largely misunderstood by the distinguished men who had tried to explain its mysteries. Still, I owe them all—and especially Mr. Etheridge, late of our Philosophical Institute, in Park Street, Bristol, and now of the National Geological Museum, in Cromwell Road, London—a deep debt of gratitude; they helped me, and inspired me, when I was green and inexperienced. In 1851, I, with others, embarked on the development of the Parkfield Colliery. Many had failed in that enterprise before I succeeded, and the result has been largely beneficial to hundreds of homes and thousands of honest working men who have been able there to provide for themselves and others, and at the same time enrich the neighbourhood in which they lived and the nation to which they belong. The seams of coal that I was enabled to develope in the Parkfield coalfield are becoming exhausted, so far as my side of the basin is concerned; but I hope, and expect, during the next two years to bring within sight and reach at Parkfield some large resources of mineral wealth that may, and I hope will, give employment and produce wealth for the generation that may follow me. At Kingswood my success has been still more striking and satisfactory. Here, in 1861, I took a colliery that was supposed to be exhausted, and had certainly been comparatively unsuccessful. It has been a very trying enterprise, and has often looked disappointing, but my faith in it has never wavered, and the result has more than realised my most sanguine expectations. But what to me is the most pleasing fact of all is that the Kingswood Colliery is only at the beginning of what, I am sure, will be the most successful period of its history. The discovery I have lately made here will give a life to mining enterprise in this district that I had no conception of ten years ago.

A paragraph from Mr. Hudson, whom I have before quoted, may appropriately follow these interesting facts. Writing with especial reference to Mr. Cossham's practical business character, he says:—"To conspicuous individuality and great force of character, inherited from his father, Handel Cossham has added remarkable industry in the acquisition of a great variety of information on practical, rather than speculative, subjects. Mechanics, engineering as applied to mining operations, and the science of

geology, have received his special attention ; and in the latter he has risen to some distinction. When, therefore, Handel Cossham and his relatives, Messrs. Joseph and Henry Wethered, became owners of the extensive coal mines in Gloucestershire, this scientific and technical knowledge was of special value to each and all concerned. Being on one occasion a visitor at Shortwood Lodge, as I entered the breakfast room Mr. Cossham came in by another way, clothed in a flannel suit, giving external indications that he had been underground among the colliers. This dress was presently changed for garments more appropriate to the breakfast table, and the company that awaited his presence, and in all respects the transformation was such as to make us forget the *personnel* of the Resident Engineer. But if at five o'clock in the morning Mr. Cossham was engineering underground and superintending his workpeople, at noon he was probably to be seen on "'Change," and perchance the same evening was far away attending a teetotal meeting ; so ubiquitous and energetic then, as now, was the honourable member for East Bristol."

Mr. Cossham has ever been influenced by just and generous feelings towards his employes. He has given earnest attention to questions of capital and labour ; and although not professing to have solved all the problems of these difficult subjects he has grasped principles which have enabled him to maintain satisfactory relations with his work-people. Difficulties which have arisen have been adjusted. Mutual respect and mutual confidence have been preserved. While efforts have been made to promote the comfort and welfare of the employed, they have not been regardless of the interests of the employer. Many most pleasing facts in the history of the past forty years have proved this, so that both parties can look back with some measure of satisfaction.

An important conference, organised by the Bristol and District

Working Men's Reform Association, was held in Bristol in February, 1878, to consider the then prevailing depression of trade. It was attended by delegates from many large societies in various parts of England, Scotland, and Wales; and also by several employers of labour, among whom was the late Mr. Samuel Morley, then member for the city of Bristol. The Rev. Dr. Percival, of Clifton College, a well-known friend of the working-classes, presided. An address by Mr. Cossham was the most important feature of the meeting. It presented facts and arguments which secured deep attention. From some of its conclusions there was dissent; but on the whole it was well received, and its tone throughout was admirable. Commencing with the fact that we are more dependent than any other country in Europe, or in the world, upon trade and commerce, he proceeded to discuss, as what he considered causes of depression, the following points:

I. The present laws that govern the ownership, the transfer, and the tenure of land.

II. The expenditure of the national wealth in vast and costly armaments.

III. Some of our social customs, especially our drinking habits and our national drunkenness.

IV. Class legislation tending to the maintenance of monopolies.

V. Certain conditions, resulting from changes and extensions of trade and commerce since the Repeal of the Corn Laws, which render us more subject to occasional panics and unfavourable influences than when our commercial transactions were less extensive and complicated.

VI. Want of good feeling and hearty co-operation between employers and employed, tending to destroy public confidence, lock up capital, and drive away trade.

VII. Certain unwise principles and unjust practices in Trade Unions and Trade Combinations, both of workmen and of employers.

The subject of what is called "over production" was next dealt with, and this was followed by a consideration of the question "whether the worker gets his fair share of the profits in the industry with which he is connected?" "Speaking generally and broadly," said Mr. Cossham, "I not only assent to the statement, but I assert it, that the higher the wages that can be paid to any industry the better. I do not think it is for the interest of the nation, or of any class in the nation, to have its labour underpaid. The more the masses have to spend, if the trade of the country can bear the strain, the better. I say this without qualification or reserve; and further, so far as employers are concerned, the times of greatest prosperity to them are always times when the greatest wages are being paid to the workmen. But let me impress upon you the fact, that those increased wages must result from an increased demand for labour, and the increased value of the article on which that labour is being bestowed, or it will result in loss and ruin to all concerned."

Among the closing remarks on "the best means of improving trade and increasing the value of labour," the following words, worthy of being remembered by capitalists and labourers alike, are found :—"One thing is clear—no one can raise the labourers of the country if they do not seek to raise themselves : a helping hand all can give, and to the fulfilment of that Christian duty I invite all to aspire."

As I write this chapter the papers report a demand for an advance of wages by the colliers of the Bristol district, acting upon a decision of the Miners' Conference. An interview between Mr. Cossham and a deputation of his workmen has been

of a most friendly and satisfactory character. An immediate advance of five per cent. was conceded, and a further advance of five per cent. in September was promised.

These circumstances had scarcely transpired before some charges reflecting on the character of Mr. Cossham as an employer appeared in one of the daily papers. It was pretty evident that the writer had some sinister design. A brief statement from Mr. Cossham completely disposed of these false accusations. This was supported by the following letter to the *Daily News* :—

MR. HANDEL COSSHAM'S COLLIERIES.

SIR,—I can fully bear out the statements made by Mr. Handel Cossham, M.P., in your issue of to-day, for I was employed under Mr. Cossham at his (Deep Pit) over 20 years ago. The rule then was eight hour shifts—1st, from 6 a.m. till 2 p.m. ; 2nd, from 2 p.m. till 10 p.m. ; 3rd, from 10 p.m. till 6 a.m. ; making in all three shifts of eight hours each during day and night. I have known men and boys to be employed double shifts. But double wages was the result of this extra work, and that only during the winter season, when the demand was greater than the output. I have also known Mr. Cossham to come down into the workings and eat bread and cheese with his men and boys at all times, night and day. I see that Mr. Cossham is announced to address a meeting of Sir Robert Peel's supporters at Brighton, and no doubt the statement published was made to throw dust in the eyes of the working-men of Brighton, and by so doing bring discredit on one of the best employers of labour in the country.—Yours &c., JOHN COOKSON.

Member of the Leamington School Board.

Leamington, Oct. 14, 1889.

Accustomed to live among his workpeople, Mr. Cossham spends much of his time at Holly Lodge, a pleasant residence beautifully situated near the Kingswood Collieries. Here he transacts much of his business, meets with his employés, and often hospitably entertains his friends. Almost adjoining his grounds there is a picturesque portion of the ancient Kingswood Forest, which he intends presenting to the people of the neighbourhood as a public park.

LOCAL OFFICES AND HONOURS.

"Happy the man who wins the love
Of those who round him dwell;
Honoured the man whose neighbours' lips
Delight his praise to tell:
His worth must surely be confessed,
Esteemed by those who know him best."

CHAPTER X.



IT is a high authority which declares that "a prophet hath no honour in his own country." Based on general truth the words have become a proverb. Exceptional cases are rare, but there are some; and that of Mr. Cossham is one of great interest. He made his first marks in his native town, and won as a youth golden opinions from the people who had known him as a child. Those who listened to him as he preached from the pulpit, or spoke on the Temperance platform, or discussed politics in the public meeting, might have asked "Is not this the carpenter's son?" but, nevertheless, they were not "offended in him."

Mr. Cossham has continued through life associated with that part of Gloucestershire that gave him birth. After his marriage he resided for a time at the pleasant little town of Wickwar; then for thirteen years at Shortwood Lodge, in the parish of

Pucklechurch, and near his Parkfield Collieries. Hill House, in the parish of Mangotsfield, was his next residence, where he remained from 1864 till 1874, when, crossing the county border into Somersetshire, he purchased property in the parish of Weston, a suburb of the ancient and beautiful City of Bath, where he built himself the commodious and finely situated house now known as Weston Park. He has, however, continued to occupy Holly Lodge, spending at it a considerable portion of his time. He has thus, like his friend Benjamin Parsons, lived and worked within sight, as it were, of his birthplace, and among those who have known him from his childhood.

In Christian Churches, and other religious organisations, both in his own immediate district and in those around, Mr. Cossham's worth and abilities have been very generally recognised. His services as a preacher and speaker have been in great demand at anniversaries, foundation laying ceremonies, chapel openings, and on other special occasions, among Congregationalists, Baptists, Wesleyans, Primitive Methodists, and other denominations. He has also held numerous Church offices and served on committees for various religious and philanthropic objects. For many years he was an active member of the Executive Committee of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Congregational Union, and in that capacity did good work in promoting the welfare of rural churches and evangelising spiritually neglected parts of the county. In this field of usefulness two of his most active and efficient co-workers were his personal friends, Mr. William Sommerville, J.P., of Bitton Hill, and the late Mr. H. O. Wills, of Bristol.

A record of these varied efforts and experiences would furnish much information and contain many interesting incidents relative to the religious condition and history of this part of our country.

In municipal matters Mr. Cossham has borne a full share of

responsibilities and honours in connection with the two great neighbouring cities of Bristol and Bath. In his boyhood he heard of Corporation Reform as effected "by a Liberal ministry in 1835." Speaking of the need of this measure, Molesworth, in his *History of England*, says—"In the middle ages the members of the Corporations had been elected by the freemen of each town. But the Tudor sovereigns had infringed on this ancient liberty; and under the Stuarts the charters had been remodelled in such a manner as to take away, if not the appearance, at all events the reality of popular election, and to transfer to the crown the power of appointing the municipalities. The charters granted by William III. and his successors were in like form. Under such charters abuses of every kind had grown up, and municipal corruption was associated with parliamentary corruption, and was carried to even a greater height."

These evils were largely remedied by Lord John Russell's bill which provided for the election of municipal bodies by the suffrages of the people, thus securing a local government based on the will of the inhabitants of every corporate city and town in the Kingdom. As time moved on Mr. Cossham watched this system at work, approving its principles and becoming prepared to bear an active and useful part in its aims and operations. His fitness for such work was seen, and in 1864 he was elected to the Town Council of Bristol, an office which he held till 1870.

In 1882, he was elected to a similar office in the Town Council of Bath. A party vote at once raised him to the Mayoral chair. With the annoyance which political opponents felt at this proceeding he much sympathised, and entered upon the duties of his important office determined to fulfil them in the most generous and public spirited manner.

The best of all proofs that he successfully carried this wise

resolve into practice was supplied when, at the expiration of his term of office, there was a general desire for his re-election. Honourable as this was on the part of the Corporation, and flattering as it was to himself, he judged it better to decline the proposal and let affairs take their usual course. The result was that in the following year, 1884, he was again elected, and that by a unanimous vote, to the dignity of the Mayoral chair.

The duties of the high civic office which he thus twice filled were acknowledged by all classes of the citizens to have been ably and honourably performed. The chief magistrate of such a city has to fulfil many functions and play many parts. In the discharge of all official responsibilities he has to proceed with judgment, uprightness and impartiality such as none can impeach, while in his public, but less official character, amidst opposite political parties, various religious bodies, and different classes of citizens, he has to pursue a course making high demands upon mind, manners, purse and heart. The records of Mr. Cossham's Mayoralty show how well he met the requirements of the position. Facts and incidents illustrative of this might be given in abundance. His address and success in his new character surprised and disappointed some of his ignorant political opponents who, having looked at only one of his many sides, could scarcely "recognise in the soft-spoken Mayor the hard-mouthed Mr. Handel Cossham" of their previous experiences.

A presentation to Mr. Cossham, at Bath, on October 1st, 1886, was a remarkable expression of local feeling. The testimonial, which took the form of a portrait of himself, executed in oils, was subscribed for by a large number of citizens and friends, in recognition of his services to the Liberal party in Bath. It was appropriately presented in connection with the Bath Young Men's Liberal Association, which Mr. Cossham originated fourteen years

before—being the first of those Junior Liberal organisations which are now doing good work in so many parts of the Kingdom. The meeting, which was crowded and enthusiastic, was presided over by Mr. G. P. Fuller, M.P., who was supported by numerous well-known and influential gentlemen.

The presentation was made by Alderman Bright, and addresses were delivered by the Chairman and others. Mr. A. B. Winterbotham, M.P., who was in happy vein, spoke of Mr. Cossham's energy, ability, and determination, of his strong and direct way of expressing his opinions, calling "a spade a spade, and a Tory a Tory," and doubted whether any Primrose dame had attempted to convert him. Mr. W. H. Wills, of Bristol, speaking of Mr. Cossham's working powers, said that to him might well be applied the words—

> Langour is not in his heart,
> Weakness is not in his work,
> Weariness is not on his brow.

Mr. Banister Fletcher described him as a tower of strength to the Liberal party.

Letters and telegrams from Sir J. D. Weston, Sir W. V. Guise, Bart., Mr. Thomas Robinson, M.P., Mr. Lewis Fry, M.P., Mr. Stafford Howard and Mr. Harold Lewis, conveyed congratulations and bore high testimony to the many valuable public services which Mr. Cossham had rendered, and to the high esteem in which he was held in the West of England. Mr. Jerom Murch, of Cranwells, who for the fifth time was filling the office of Mayor of the city, and who had taken a great interest in the testimonial, denied himself the pleasure of being present, feeling that it might not be consistent with his official position.

On the strange, but true, principle, that "it is more blessed to

give than to receive," perhaps, one of the most interesting occasions in Mr. Cossham's life was that on which he presented "Cossham Hall" as a building for public uses to the inhabitants of his native town. This event took place December 20, 1888. in a meeting under the presidency of Mr. Stafford Howard, of Thornbury Castle. Animated by a sentiment which the Chairman happily described as "local patriotism," Mr. Cossham having purchased the building, the history of which is full of interest as connected with the Wesleyan Methodism of the town, had it adapted for public purposes, and invested in twenty trustees, representing every class and section of the people. The conclusion of Mr. Cossham's address indicates the generosity of his heart and the strength of his local attachments, as well as the broadness of his aims. After speaking of the history and uses of the Hall, he said :—

Well, to-night we are met to dedicate it to you and your children for ever. I don't pretend that it is a large gift, but I hope it is not entirely unworthy of your acceptance. One thing I think requires explanation, perhaps justification. It may seem to savor of egotism that I should call it Cossham Hall. My object has been to connect my name with the town of my birth, and the home of my childhood. I have no son to carry on that name, and it is probable that my association, in business and public life, may cause my dust hereafter to rest elsewhere. But the name of my family has been associated with this town for generations, and can be traced back to a time when much, if not most, of the property lying at this end of the town belonged to them. They have died out, and the name, so far as Thornbury is concerned, seems likely to pass away. I ask under these circumstances your permission to let it live in the name of Cossham Hall. I have been fortunate, under Mr. Howard's guidance, in securing a band of gentlemen who, as trustees, will I am sure take care of the building, which, with its furniture and fittings, I now hand over to them. I congratulate myself, and I warmly congratulate you, on having in your midst as counsellor and guide Mr. Howard, who, with his amiable lady, is worthy of the respect, and I may almost say the affection, of all his fellow townsmen. I

have left the use of the hall entirely in the hands of the trustees and the committees, who may, and I hope will, use it frequently for all purposes that will, in any way, benefit the town. I hope it may never become a centre of sectarian narrowness, or party animosity, but that all sects, all parties, and all efforts, to enlighten the people, may here find common ground and a rallying centre. May God bless the old town. Hallowed and sacred memories crowd my mind as I now hand over to you a small token of my best wishes for your future peace, prosperity, and progress; and when my voice is silent, as it soon will be, in death, and my personal name has passed away, may "Cossham Hall" help to remind you that it is possible "though dead yet to speak" to generations now unborn, by a memorial raised during life, rather than by monuments raised by loving hands after death.

It is scarcely necessary to add that these words were received with hearty applause, and that the generous gift is most gratefully appreciated. It is pleasing to know that in Thornbury a lively interest in Mr. Cossham's career is felt by the people generally, and that the result of his candidature at East Bristol has on each occasion been hailed with enthusiasm.

Under some pressure, Mr. Cossham became a candidate in the St. George's District, for the office of County Councillor, at the first election under the Local Government Act, in January, 1889. He was returned unopposed, and events have justified the wisdom of his friends in choosing him as their representative in such an assembly.

LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC WORK.

"Through the art of printing, knowledge is fast becoming the possession of all. Through that art, what the people have gained in the past is secured for the future. It has established the empire of public opinion."—CHARLES KNIGHT.

"Search out the wisdom of nature, there is depth in all her doings."—*Proverbial Philosophy.*

CHAPTER XI.

IT is almost impossible to overestimate the value of a good early education. The varied knowledge then gained becomes a nucleus around which further information can be gathered, the mind thus gradually becoming a well arranged storehouse of facts with which the disciplined faculties learn to deal with ease and success. It is only those who have not been thus privileged who can fully understand the disadvantages which attend the want of a thorough, careful and liberal training of the mental powers in early life. No man can ever completely overcome it, and none who have once become truly conscious of it will ever fail to feel it.

But once conscious of deficiencies, and resolved to do something

to retrieve early losses, it is astonishing how much an earnest and capable mind can effect. Glad and thankful as Mr. Cossham was for the moral training he had received, and for such general knowledge as had been imparted to him in his boyhood, he soon discovered that there was much to be learned; and also that there was much to be done in disciplining the active powers which were striving within him. In this important work he found some helps, but many of his methods of study were original, and such as none but an intensely earnest mind would have devised.

There is no surer method of retaining and increasing the knowledge we have gained than by endeavouring to communicate it to others. In teaching we learn: "there is that scattereth and yet increaseth." Mr. Cossham's acquisitions of knowledge were turned to useful account; he sought to impart to others that which he found to be good for himself. In these endeavours he acquired great facility, becoming, both by tongue and pen, a ready and able exponent of subjects to which he devoted his attention.

Some idea of the variety of his work as a pamphleteer is afforded by a list of some of his published writings, which is given in the *Biographical Magazine*. Geology, Politics, Commerce, Church, Dissent, War, Peace, and Temperance are among the subjects he here appears to have handled, but to these may be added many others. The number of his publications is still more imperfectly represented by this list, which might be extended to probably three times its length. As a believer in the power of the "Fourth Estate," Mr. Cossham has made large use of the Newspaper Press. Of his articles and letters which have appeared in the columns of London and provincial papers there is no record, but the number must be great.

It is impossible to read Mr. Cossham's writings without feeling

that they are the productions of a strong and earnest mind. The range of thought is not always broad, and extreme conclusions are sometimes reached; but it is always evident that there has been an honest search after truth. The facts with which many of these works are packed indicate a good amount of careful and patient research. The manual toil, too, of such an amount of writing must have been very considerable, and may, in part, account for the chaotic character of his handwriting, which has often called forth the private remonstrances of his correspondents, and on one occasion the public and pathetic rebuke of his honourable friend, Mr. Arthur B. Winterbotham, the worthy member for the Cirencester Division of Gloucestershire. I have, however, never heard so good a tale told of Mr. Cossham's caligraphy as one, strictly true, which is told by an eye-witness, of the penmanship of the late Mr. John Morton, many years manager of Earl Ducie's Example farm at Whitfield. Mr. Morton had written an important letter to the late Mr. J. G. Ball, coroner, at Stroud, and was surprised to see Mr. Ball drive to his door next morning. "Have you had my letter?" he asked. "Yes," was the reply, "and I want you to read it, for I can't." Neither could the penman himself, and after vain attempts he confessed his utter inability to decipher his own handwriting of the previous evening! I have never heard that Mr. Cossham has equalled that.

"I have no pretensions," Mr. Cossham has said, "to be called a scientific man;" nor do his friends claim that title for him. But his scientific attainments are not mean, and his persevering and practical labours have, in one direction at least, led to important results.

At the commencement of the period, which this narrative covers, science was not in the air as it now is. Those who have lived through the past threescore years have seen marvellous discoveries

and achievements. Looking back to the time of George IV. we see a state of things which contrasts strangely with the present. Steam power was in its infancy. Railways were but dreams. The chief motive powers in mills and factories were wind and water. Lightning had not yet been subjected to man's control. The click of the telegraph was not yet heard, and not an inch of our millions of miles of electric wires was then in existence. Telephone and phonograph were alike unknown. Many departments of chemical investigation had not been entered upon, while Natural History inquiry in several of its present interesting branches did not exist. Thousands of facts now known to our children were undreamt of by the philosophers of the day. The increase of Astronomical knowledge has been marvellous, and Geology, at that period crude in its form and regarded with doubt and suspicion, has developed into a science represented by Professorial Chairs in the Universities.

To this last named science Mr. Cossham's attention was specially drawn. His mining pursuits called for an intelligent knowledge of many facts with which geology alone could acquaint him. He had no notion of working in the dark when it was possible to obtain light. Years of hard study, patient observation, and practical working have, in addition to much general knowledge of the science, given him an extensive and familiar acquaintance with the geology of his own district, and particularly that of the coalfields. On a recent occasion Mr. Cossham gave a technical and detailed description of the Kingswood series of mineral veins, and their geological position in the Bristol section, and showed, by means of a number of maps and sections, the resources that his recent discoveries have placed within reach of the present pits, as well as the probable effect it will have on the future development of the northern end of the Bristol coalfield,

and on the future of Bristol as a commercial manufacturing centre, and not remotely on it, as a great export outlet for coal by means of its docks.

In concluding this interesting description he remarked :—

The geological problems in this part of the coalfield are mainly solved now. I can read it like a book, and see what can be developed in future out of what we have discovered in a way that is to me a matter of ever increasing pleasure and satisfaction. So far as discovery goes in this coalfield my work, I think, is done. I hope it may yet be given me, in connection with my intelligent staff, and my brave and noble band of workers, to commercially develop and utilise the vast mineral treasures which Nature has for ages locked up in this district, waiting for the science and enterprise of the last quarter of the 19th century to unlock and lay bare.

On the occasion of a visit of the members and friends of the South Wales Institute of Engineers to the Bristol Coalfields, in June, 1885, Mr. Cossham read a paper "On a very remarkable Discovery made early in 1884, at the Speedwell Colliery of the Kingswood and Parkfield Collieries Company." Two or three discoveries, having important bearings on mining in this district, had rewarded Mr. Cossham's investigations previous to this yet greater one, of which he thus speaks :—

Nearly twenty years ago I discovered that some great, but hidden force, had operated on the coalfield from the south, thrusting the strata forward in the centre, not far from our Speedwell pit, where we now stand, and leaving the sides rather behind in consequence of the greater resistance at those points, and that this thrust had made the level course of the seams of a half moon shape with a tend westward, to the west of the field, and a tend to the south on the east end of the basin. The subsequent explorations at the South Liberty Colliery of the Ashton Vale Company, I think, if read in connection with our explorations at Kingswood, will fully confirm this theory, and it has a bearing, and an important bearing, on the discovery to which I am about to refer.

That discovery is this—the Toad Vein, or Great Vein groups of seams at Kingswood had been practically—as it was supposed—exhausted to the north

of our Speedwell Pit, which has been for some years worked at a depth of 500 yards—and I resolved to drive a level cross measure drift to the north of the pit for the purpose of proving the existence and quality of the Ashton (or lowest) series of veins in the district. But after driving through some 200 or 300 yards of very disturbed strata, nearly vertical, in which we found a seam of coal, also vertical, about 2ft. 4in. thick, we came into a series of fine beds of shale and coal lying nearly horizontal, with a dip, not very severe, to the west.

This being so utterly unlike anything that I expected, it formed, as you may suppose, the subject of anxious inquiry and unremitting attention, and investigation, on the part of my manager (Mr. Jacob Sparks) and myself—the happy result of which was that we found that instead of reaching the Ashton Veins, we were undoubtedly on the old Great Vein Group, every member of which (but one) we have now proved *in situ*, and of over average thickness and quality.

As it is, we are now loading some 1,000 tons a week from the veins lately discovered, and in a few months we shall have the adjoining pit (some 800 yards to the west) working in this group, and shall be able to largely extend our operations on the veins lately discovered. I am happy to inform you that the exploring branch I am driving at the adjoining pit has for some time been drifting in the horizontal strata, and that we have passed through the Hard Vein, which lies above the Great Vein series, thus proving the continuity, and in some measure the extent, of the area over which the new series extends.

I have gone far enough now to show that the new discovery will affect a much larger area of our property than I at first supposed, and I feel certain I am within bounds when I estimate the probable extra production of coal from the veins lately discovered on the property of the Kingswood and Parkfield Company alone at 20,000,000 tons, which is double what I felt able to predict a year ago—my further explorations justifying the increase of the probable quantity that will be found under our estate.

I say nothing at present of the extent of these new mineral resources beyond the boundary of the freehold belonging to my Company ; but I believe it to be very large, and that it will open up vast mineral treasures in the future over a very wide area.

The discoverer's theory explanatory of these phenomenal facts is one of great interest to geologists, by whom it is accepted as

sufficient and satisfactory. Its chief feature is the influence of lateral pressure from the Mendip Hills side, resulting in the formation of the Avon valley and the great faults in the coal veins and other strata.

Nearly forty years ago Mr. Cossham, in conjunction with his friend Mr. Etheridge, originated the Bristol Mining School. This institution, now known as the Trade and Mining School, and carrying on its important work at Bristol, was founded for the training of students in such a knowledge of mining as would fit them for its scientific and practical pursuit. In the interests of this useful educational enterprise, Mr. Cossham has worked with great devotion. Besides aiding in its support and management, he renders valuable help in its teaching department, frequently lecturing to the students. The subjects of his lectures are always well chosen, fitted to awaken interest and afford instruction. Among others delivered in the course of successive years are the following:—"Eminent Miners," "History of the Steam Engine," "Safety Arrangements for Boilers," "Natural History of Coal," "Coal Mining," "Faults in the Bristol Coalfield," "Coal and its Uses."

Science as pursued by Mr. Cossham has not meant merely studies which could be followed in the armchair or experiments which could be made in a laboratory. It has meant much hard work, and that often under conditions not conducive to bodily comfort. It might, nevertheless, be affirmed with truth that in these occupations he has found a large amount of recreation. Hours of enjoyment have been spent among his fossils in his own well-arranged museum; and days of pleasant researches in quarries and river beds, on hill sides and valley depths, with congenial associates. He recalls with pleasure some excursions with his friend, the late Sir William V. Guise, Bart., who sympathised

heartily with his geological speculations and enterprises; and between whom and himself there was much that was favourable to free interchange of thought, and mutual esteem.

Mr. Cossham was elected a Fellow of the Geological Society in 1855, in recognition of his labours in connection with the Bristol coalfield. He is also a member of the Cotteswold Naturalists' Field Club—which he has entertained on several occasions. At the meetings of the British Association he has read elaborate papers on various subjects.

In reference to his geological and other natural history pursuits, Mr. Cossham has used words which may fitly close this chapter: "I am fond of the study of nature and nature's laws. I see a Divine hand in all around: design, wisdom, beneficence everywhere. In Geology I see what no other science displays—absolute proofs of a Creator. I earnestly recommend to young men the devout study of nature; it is full of teaching and lessons for us all."



PERSONAL.

"Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way,
But to act, that each to-morrow
Find us farther than to-day."

LONGFELLOW.

"Having obtained help of God, I continue unto this day."—PAUL; *Acts xxvi.*, 22.

CHAPTER XII.



LIFE is generally an exposition of a man's abilities and a revelation of his moral nature. The doubts that in early years might have existed as to what manner of man he was, are dispelled as time rolls on. His sayings and doings; the greater and smaller works of his hands, the studied and the free utterances of his lips, the expressions of his countenance and the thousand incidents of his daily course will largely proclaim him to his fellow-men—at least to the observant and unprejudiced. By his fruits he becomes known. Records, therefore, of what a man has said and done through his life furnish photographs of his intellectual powers, his prevailing tastes and his chief moral characteristics.

But like the photographs of art, such views will be necessarily imperfect, showing but parts, and failing to present some aspects of the subject. Hence it comes to pass that when we have read not outlines merely, but detailed memoirs of some man's career, there are many points on which we would know more; features of his character which we would more fully and plainly see; facts pertaining to his person and his habits concerning which we would ask questions.

Some of this curiosity must remain ungratified. The complicated machinery of intellect and heart and will; thoughts, affections, aims, motives, hopes, fears, sorrows, joys, impulses and influences, can be watched by no outer human eye and chronicled by no human knowledge. "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?" Even a man's own self-knowledge is more or less imperfect and erroneous. The brief precept "Know thyself" cannot be perfectly fulfilled. There are processes in the subtle workings of the soul which man can no more trace than he can discern the operations of his own brain or the actions of his own heart. We all dwell both as to ourselves and others, in some darkness which human vision cannot pierce. Of much, therefore, that pertains to human character we can say little or nothing as yet: it must be left to an Omniscient eye and a future judgment: "The day shall declare it."

But such things as are plainly manifested in the outward life are fairly open to observation. They are fruits which we may judge. On this principle we may direct attention to some features of Mr. Cossham's mental and moral character.

His older friends can remember the time when many stood in doubt of him, and some even prophesied evil. There was much in him to awaken the suspicions and alarm of weak and narrow minds. A young man of great energy, fearless in spirit, bold in

speech, unconventional in modes of procedure, extreme in opinion, impatient of what he deemed unjust restraints, and claiming for himself and others a large amount of religious and political freedom, what could he be but a dangerous demagogue whose aim was revolution and whose end would be destruction!

Not only Tories, jealous for the honour of "our glorious constitution" with all its anomalies and monopolies, but weak-kneed Liberals frowned their disapproval. Nonconformist ministers, in some instances, were among his opponents. If angry denunciations, ugly epithets and awful predictions could have silenced or annihilated him, he would have sunk into oblivion or ceased to be almost as soon as his public course began.

Whatever other opinion may be formed of Mr. Cossham, it must be acknowledged by all that he is a man of uncommon energy. Mental and moral vigour have marked all his course. The work he has done proves that in mind and body he is a strong man. It would seem as though he had adopted Solomon's words as the rule of his life "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." He has found many things to do, and has wrought hard with hand and heart. And though he has now reached an age when a man, "if not reckoned old, may fairly be described as elderly," he is still both physically and mentally vigorous, doing an amount of work from which many strong young men would shrink; and doing it well and cheerfully.

Mr. Cossham's independence of spirit and love of freedom, while finely harmonising with his mental and physical constitution, might, doubtless, be traced to a deep moral basis. His views of man's natural dignity, of his relation to his fellow-man, and, above all, of his relation to God, have served to inspire him with ennobling conceptions of human rights and destinies. Looking below all the accidents of birth and all the circumstances

of rank and race, whatever they may be, he sees that "a man's a man, for a' that;" and if a man, then, standing on an equality with all others as to natural and inalienable rights. He claims for himself and for every man, in all departments of religious and civil thought and action, the fullest liberty compatible with the rights of others. To coerce a human being, high or low, in the exercise of his lawful liberty, by pains and penalties or any other means, he counts sin against God and man. It is these deep convictions which have made him so bold a champion of popular freedom. The American writer who called him "a modern Ironside," estimated him aright. It is easy to imagine that had his lot been cast in the Cromwellian period, he would have leaped into the saddle, grasped the sword, and been foremost in the fight against Stuart tyranny.

The writer in the *Biographical Magazine* bears high testimony to Mr. Cossham's political consistency, when he says, "Consistent to a degree, and always ready to espouse the cause of Right, however unpopular for the time being that cause may have been, we have no difficulty for accounting for his present attitude on the Irish question." This witness is true. If by consistency we mean agreement between principles and practice, then Mr. Cossham through life has proved himself a consistent man. His course as a politician has been shaped by his principles as a Christian philanthropist; and in that course, says one who has known him for forty years, "he has never wavered." Consistent himself, he expects others to be so; and, perhaps, nothing more awakens his indignation and contempt than hypocrisy. Of this some have had sharp experience.

Viewed in some aspects Mr. Cossham may appear harsh in some of his judgments and unnecessarily severe in some of his denunciations. It is true that both in and out of Parliament he

has spoken more plainly than most men, and, doubtless, at times has spoken with undue force. But whatever may be his style, his aim is right and his spirit is just: nor just only, but, as a rule, kind and genial. Two of his oldest friends recently discussing this point, agreed that the more intimately he was known the less would he be misjudged as contentious or vindictive. It should be borne in mind that denunciations of institutions do not necessarily involve hostility to those by whom they are sustained. Those who most plainly see the evil of a system are the most likely to look upon the men connected with it "more in sorrow than in anger." This was remarkably the case with Samuel Bowly, who, while most vividly seeing the evils of slavery and intemperance, yet most deeply pitied the holders of slaves and the dealers in drink. Mr. Cossham's friends believe he is largely moved by the same feeling.

An instance of his generosity of mind may here be mentioned. Many years ago a commercial gentleman, residing in the Bristol district, gave currency to some serious charges affecting Mr. Cossham's integrity. It was suggested that the matter should be referred to mutual friends, and Mr. William Sommerville, with the approval of both parties, made satisfactory arrangements for a thorough and impartial inquiry. The result was the most complete vindication of Mr. Cossham, who on hearing the decision immediately drove accross the country to the residence of his accuser, to assure him of his desire so to forgive and forget the past that there should be no uneasiness in their future intercourse. It was an act quite characteristic of him: few men are more generous towards opponents.

The American writer, before quoted, graphically sketches him as a public speaker, "He is a plain but forceful speaker. Tall, strongly built, of powerful voice, homely style, genial manner,

bold in denunciation, he wins and commands every audience he addresses. Full of facts as sugar is of fattening power, ready with a "ready reckoner" on all subjects, apt at Biblical references, hating ignorance, vice and oppression—he is a powerful advocate and a dangerous adversary. Not prolix, ready at illustration, vigorous in delivery, well-read on many subjects, and *always* master of topics he talks about—he instructs and pleases an assembly."

It is satisfactory to find that Mr. Cossham's oratorical bow "abides in strength." The qualities which won the admiration of the American critic continue to be displayed. His recent labours on the platform have not only been abundant and widespread, but heartily appreciated and successful. London and provincial papers have borne this testimony. Referring to "an inspiriting and hopeful address," which he recently delivered to the members of the Thame Liberal Association, the *South Oxfordshire News*, says—"The greater part of the large audience was composed of working-men, and we believe that few have spoken to the labouring classes of this neighbourhood with more effect than did the honourable member for Bristol East on this occasion. The exigency of space unfortunately prevents our doing anything like justice to such an able exposition of Liberal victories and principles. The address throughout had a ring in it above that of the ordinary politician, and no one could listen to the earnest words which fell from Mr. Cossham's lips without the feeling that they first came from his inmost heart. There was a moral and religious tone about them which carried conviction right home, and we are glad to know that the increase in the numbers of the association, which we hear has taken place since the meeting, is due entirely to the effect of his zealous eloquence that evening."

Many of his hearers tell interesting and amusing stories in

reference to his public appearances. Lecturing on one occasion, when he was less known than he is now, the chair was filled by a young aristocrat, who at first did not seem much interested in the proceedings. But as the lecturer warmed to his work, and by various powerfully presented facts set forth the "Greatness of the British Empire," and pointed out its responsibilities and dangers, the president's attention was thoroughly aroused, and the changes which his countenance underwent would have been a study for a physiognomist. It was said of Mr. Cobden that he was able to think when on his legs. Mr. Cossham has the same ability, and can not only pursue his line of argument amidst hisses and howls, but can give a Roland for an Oliver to his opponents.*

When with readiness of mind there are joined mechanical knowledge and manual dexterity, a man is likely to be resourceful in time of need, and so Mr. Cossham has often shown himself to be. He would, doubtless, have excelled as an engineer. There can be no question that he possesses in large measure the qualifications which are required in a successful explorer or colonist. Cast upon a desert island he would play the part of a Robinson Crusoe better than most men. Although not devoted to sport he has shown some fondness for the gun, but would prefer bigger game than English preserves offer.

Inheriting from his father a love of music, he gave in early life

* Reference to Mr Cobden reminds me of an incident in connection with a speech I heard him make in the Shire Hall, at Gloucester, during the Anti-Corn Law agitation. One of the audience so repeatedly and noisily interrupted him, that there were loud calls to "turn him out." "No; no;" interposed Mr. Cobden, "the gentleman has given us proofs of what we do not at all doubt, the strength of his lungs; and if he will wait till I have done, he shall have fair opportunity to give us proofs of *what we do very much doubt, the strength of his understanding.*"

some time to the violin. He enjoys good congregational singing, and has made excellent musical provision for the service of song in his Bible Class. Fond of flowers and trees he finds pleasure in his conservatories, and has adorned some rugged spots adjoining his works by the labours of the planter. A little observatory, at the top of his house, well-furnished with glasses, enables him to indulge a taste for astronomy.

One secret of the great amount of work he has accomplished is found in the fact that he can do with a small allowance of sleep, and has been through life an early riser. All his personal habits are plain. His enjoyment of home life is great, which renders the self-denial with which he so largely forgoes its pleasures, that he might do public service, the more marked and commendable.

While some of his more recent friends will associate him chiefly with his present residence, Weston Park, and others will remember him as connected with Hill House, his older friends have pleasant memories of Shortwood Lodge. The American writer, already quoted, charmed with it and the surrounding district, and rejoicing in the moral influences of which it is the centre, almost sings his pleasure and admiration.

In a pretty spot, amid trees of richest foliage, green pastures, clear rills of water, and heat giving mines; amid the beauties and perfume of flowers; where nightingales meet to fill the air with echoes from the realms of joy; where bees industriously gather sweets from modest violet and blushing rose; where labour clothes itself in self-respect, and practises temperance, prudence, and manliness—is the dwelling place, the home of Handel Cossham. Children gather round him to repeat their hymns and receive his praise. Happy wives look delight upon the considerate employer of their husbands. Working Mens' Associations applaud him for assisting them with money and time. Society feels and is benefited by the power of his thoughts, the force of his language, and the enthusiasm of his heart. Long may he live to help the weak and defend the oppressed!

To this prayer thousands will add their hearty "Amen."

CONCLUSION.

"Men will never generally be just to one another, but under the sense of the presence of the God of Justice."—JOHN FOSTER.

"The first condition of human goodness is something to love; and the second, something to reverence."—GEORGE ELIOT.

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD."—DAVID: *Psalm xxxiii.*, 12.

CHAPTER XIII.



SUCH a period and such a life as these *Outlines* have briefly sketched, suggest many thoughts and inquiries. Looking back, and comparing the past with the present, it is impossible to deny that great progress has been made in every desirable direction. Molesworth, in closing his work *The History of England from the Year* 1830—1874, says, "In no period in the history of this or any other country has the progress of the nation been so great or so manifest as in that whose history we have attempted to narrate. By the census of 1831 the population of England and Wales was 13,897,187. The enumeration of 1871 showed a population of 22,704,108. . . . The population has not only much augumented, it is maintained with greater ease, is far better

fed, housed, clad, and educated, at the close of the period than it was at its commencement." He proceeds to speak of the spread of education, the employment of sanitary precautions and consequent decrease of disease, diminished pauperism, and other signs of improvement. Referring to some of the causes of this he names "freer trade, wiser legislation, improved institutions, a better education of the people, a wider diffusion of information through the Press and by means of public meetings, the post office, and the electric telegraph; the swifter conveyance of our goods and persons, and improvements in our agricultural operations."

Among the guarantees for the continuance of this improved state of things, he mentions "the more moral and religious character of our legislation, as it has become the more distinct utterance of public opinion and national will." As proof of this he instances the changed feeling which was growing in reference to Ireland. At the beginning of that period of which he wrote, "Ireland's cry for justice was treated with insolent derision; at the close of it 'Be just, and fear not,'" was becoming a cardinal principle in our legislation. Class power was waning; the masses were making their voice heard and their influence felt.

To this favourable testimony how much might be added from the history of the past fifteen years! In social life, in morals, in religious thought, in legislation, and in political aims and efforts, advances have been made and good effected which it becomes us gladly to acknowledge, gratefully remembering the men by whose labours these results have been obtained.

But the inquiry arises: How is it that for so long the social, industrial, political and religious conditions of our country remained such as to require the great changes and improvements that have been wrought thus late in the nineteenth century? For

nearly two thousand years Christianity had been in our world; for many centuries the Church had held sway in England, Kings had ruled in its name, and legislation had professedly been based upon its principles. And yet sixty years ago slavery was legalised, bread was taxed, full religious rights were withheld, the franchise was denied to the masses of the people, agricultural labourers were serfs, women worked in coalpits, children were left in ignorance; poverty and crime and vice prevailed. How was this? The answer is largely to be found in the fact that the upper classes possessed the ruling power, and the majority of these, both in Church and State, were "good old Conservatives," who feared change, and whose chief care was to keep things as they were. A selfish and shortsighted policy!

But while acknowledging progress and rejoicing in all the good that has been done, we are still forced to ask, How is it that progress is so slow; that reforms are so partial; and that so many evils still exist? Intemperance is still working misery, crime, and death in all parts of the land, and still the drink traffic is legalised, protected, and encouraged! Poverty still frightfully prevails, and multitudes of our toilers earn but an insufficient and a precarious livelihood, and yet there is no general and earnest effort to solve the problems of Capital and Labour, with an honest desire to secure to workers a more just and equitable share of profits. Commercial competition in many of its most selfish and cruel forms still rages, producing such conditions in business and society, that, as a powerful writer has said, "in the foul fight" to provide for the wants of a family, even the best men are tempted to "cheat, overreach, supplant, defraud; to buy below worth and sell above; to break down the business by which their neighbours feed their young ones; to tempt men to buy what they ought not, and sell what they should not; to grind

their labourers, sweat their debtors, and cozen their creditors." This is seen, felt, acknowledged, but we still have

> the hard incessant fight
> Which waxeth fiercer day by day.

War is the same evil now it has ever been, destroying life and property, inflicting inconceivable suffering, and setting human souls on fire with "the fire of hell." And still we spend millions upon millions in maintaining enormous armaments, still we plunge into strife, still the majority of our Christian teachers justify bloodshed and slaughter, and still our little children are having a war spirit infused into their young hearts. We send missionaries and Bibles to the heathen, but we also send "liquid fire," opium, and gunpowder. Tyranny is denounced, but cruel coercion is still practised. Purity is preached, but social evils still greatly pollute our land. Persecution and intolerance in matters of religion are condemned, but the supremacy of a State Church still exists, and the injustice of religious inequality still continues.

How much, then, there is yet to be done! How greatly and how long will the labours of such Christian Reformers and Philanthropists as Handel Cossham be needed! The late Thomas Parsons, of Stroud, speaking in 1855, at the unveiling of the monument to the memory of Benjamin Parsons, at Ebley, and referring to his abundant and useful labours in Gloucestershire, expressed the wish that every county possessed a man of like spirit and influence. We rejoice to believe that in all parts of our Kingdom many such are now to be found. They are to be found in all classes; they belong to all churches and to none. Noble-minded legislators, faithful preachers, social reformers, temperance advocates, wise and earnest teachers; women as well as men, having their particular mission and working on their own

lines, but all animated more or less by desires to glorify God and bless their fellow-men.

In the aims and efforts of such labourers there is ground for hope. Much can be done by wise and just legislation. There are evils which law might sternly repress, there are rights which law should readily concede. In the growth of intelligence and the spread of temperance among our working-classes, there will be moral elevation and a consequent increase of moral power, which will make itself felt in all departments of our national life. The franchise in the hands of an educated and sober democracy will be a mighty lever for the uplifting of the whole nation. What has already been achieved may well encourage the expectation of yet greater things.

But our hope for the future mainly lies in the fact that many of the most powerful agencies that are now working for reform and progress are truly religious in their aim and spirit. The great Temperance movement, as it was represented by Samuel Bowly—and as it is represented by thousands of its advocates to-day—is Christian in its character. Socialism, as taught by some of its leading exponents, is so based upon the principles and precepts of the New Testament that it claims to be "Christian in name." Forty years ago Benjamin Parsons was maintaining that the principles of Radicalism were essentially the principles of Hebrew Law and Christian Gospel; and in the present day these principles are held by thousands of thoughtful men as part of their religion. In all directions we see workers in the various fields of philanthropic effort exercising self-denial and carrying on their benevolent operations under the sustaining influence of the highest of all motives—love to God and love to man.

In this we rejoice, deeply convinced that all true and lasting progress must proceed on lines of truth and righteousness. It

will be only in proportion as the Kingdom of Our Father in Heaven shall come and His will be done on earth as it is in Heaven, that men will be truly blessed. By whatever means this may be accomplished, of this we may be sure, that then, and not till then, will be fulfilled the comprehensive prayer and the glorious prediction of the Hebrew psalmist—

GOD be merciful unto us, and bless us;
And cause His face to shine upon us.
Let the people praise Thee, O God;
Let all the people praise Thee.
Then shall the earth yield her increase;
And God, even our own God, shall bless us.
God shall bless us;
And all the ends of the earth shall fear Him.



NOTES.

The Great Coal Strike, March, 1890.

The last proof sheets of this little book had come to hand just as events of unusual interest and importance were transpiring in connection with the Coal Trade. The chief facts may be briefly stated.

Notwithstanding the advance of from 20 to 25 per cent. which during the past nine or ten months had been made in their wages, the colliers throughout England considered themselves entitled to a further rise, and at the end of February put in a claim for another 10 per cent. A meeting of Coal Owners to consider this demand was shortly held in London. Mr. Cossham advised a conciliatory policy, and urged that the occasion should be used to try and arrange a sliding scale, by which wages would be automatically regulated, and future disputes avoided. The masters were not prepared to adopt this course, and resolved upon one of absolute resistance. Mr. Cossham, declaring his unwillingness to go with them, resolved to follow what he believed to be a wiser and juster policy. Returning home he

at once took independent action with the men of the Kingswood and Parkfield Collieries and the Agent who represented them. A letter from Mr. John Henshaw, the Secretary of the Company, doubtless dictated by Mr. Cossham himself, set forth the facts of the case with singular clearness, and discussing the matter on its merits and in excellent spirit, proposed, instead of an immediate advance of 10 per cent., an advance of 5 per cent. from the 15th of the month, and a further 5 per cent. from July 1st.

A large meeting of the men, to whom this offer was submitted, unanimously and heartily resolved to accept it. The Conference of Delegates, assembled at Manchester, also expressed their approval, and evidently regarded the terms thus proposed as a good basis for further settlements. Such it proved, particularly in the Bristol and neighbouring districts, where, after some little discussion, it was generally adopted. The masters, however, having in many places continued their opposition, a strike of gigantic proportions commenced. The effects were soon felt. In the course of a week or so scores of thousands of men had ceased work, and as a consequence many mills in Lancashire, Yorkshire and Cheshire were closed for want of fuel. Others were in danger of stoppage in a few days. Coal prices were daily mounting higher. An absolute famine of fuel was feared. The cessation of many branches of trade and commerce seemed inevitable. Great and general anxiety was felt. Sympathy with the men was widely expressed, and it was urged that "Cossham's Compromise" should be everywhere adopted as a wise and just means of ending the dispute.

In several further instances this was done, and finally, as the result of a conference, between the representatives of the Coal Owners' Federation and delegates from the National Miner's Federation, held in London on March 20th, a settlement was

effected; and the public anxiety was relieved by the following telegram announcing the terms unanimously agreed on :—

"That the men resume work; that an advance of 5 per cent. in wages be given now, and a further advance of 5 per cent. from the first week in August. Arrangements for dealing with wages questions in future were agreed upon in principle."

It will be readily seen that these, or still more satisfactory conclusions might have been reached earlier and more happily had Mr. Cossham's counsels prevailed.

A Public Park for St. George's Parish.

In closing Chapter IX., I made a brief reference to Mr. Cossham's munificent design of presenting a park to the Parish of St. George. Just as this last sheet is going to press, this project is being further developed. The Bristol papers report that at a meeting of the St. George's Local Board, on April 2nd, Mr. Cossham made known his intention to retire from office in consequence of his numerous engagements. In making this announcement he showed by several striking facts the remarkable growth of the parish, both in population, and prosperity, during the past twenty-nine years. Predicting its yet further progress, and speaking of its wants, he said that "one of these was a public park; and that he would not conceal from them that it was his hope to be able to place within their control a park which would not be unworthy of their acceptance;" adding that it was "part of the pleasure of his life to plan and lay out this scheme."

The spirit in which this generous promise is received finds expression in the public press. The *Bristol Mercury* says .—

The statement made by Mr. Handel Cossham, M.P., at the Wednesday's meeting of the St. George's Local Board, that he intended to present a park to the parish with which he has been so long and honourably connected, has naturally caused much pleasant excitement in the district. We believe we are correct in stating that the ground which the member for Bristol East contemplates giving to St. George's is situated in the immediate vicinity of Holly Lodge, at the north end of the parish. Mr. Cossham has long entertained the idea of presenting the land to his fellow parishioners, and with the view of making the gift as acceptable as possible, has for some years been planting the site with trees, and he is now engaged in forming an ornamental piece of water. If available for model yacht sailing, it would be not only a novel feature of public parks in this district, but would be appreciated by many who have a taste for this pastime, now growing so popular in the north and elsewhere. The park, when completed, will be found to be of considerable extent, and will be a great boon to the parishioners. It is whispered that Kingswood will similarly be benefited by his liberality.

It may be added that the St. George's portion of the Bristol East parliamentary division is the present building ground for the overflowing population of the ancient city—a large parish in the improvement of which Mr. Handel Cossham has always taken, not only a special interest, but an active part. So closely is it allied with the city, that the inhabitants heartily support the proposal to include it in Bristol's municipal boundaries ; and it is no secret that especially in this connection does the member for Bristol East look forward to a suitable time for his generous gift, which, thanks to years of preparation and thoughtful care, will be more "park like" than any of the people's parks of the city, except perhaps the Clifton Down. With reference to the Kingswood gift it is stated that the land will form part of what was once the Royal Chase or Forest.

The *Western Daily Press* refers to it in similarly warm terms :—

In taking farewell of the St. George's Local Board yesterday, Mr. Cossham, M.P., made an announcement that will elicit gratitutde and pleasure, for he stated that he hoped to be able to provide the district with a public park that will be not unworthy the acceptance of the Board. The immense parish of St. George is growing more urban every day. Its population has qaudrupled in thirty years, and open spaces are rapidly disappearing. There is need for a public park to bridge over the long distance between the park at Eastville and that at Windmill Hill, Bedminster, and hitherto East Bristol, of which St. George is virtually a part, has been neglected. Mr. Cossham will be rendering a public service that will be great appreciated.



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